

# STRIKE!

50¢

Workers' Autonomy For Social Revolution

## We Can't Pay! We Won't Pay!

By Lazarus Jones

Debt in North America is all-pervasive. A recent Canadian study found that even the working poor, with incomes as low as \$3,000 per year, commonly had debts in excess of \$12,000 or more than four times their annual income. This study also found that these debts were, by and large, not incurred in chasing after consumer goods but were most often the result of borrowing to cover the costs of basic necessities like food and rent.

As the economic pinch tightens this debt burden becomes more and more intolerable as the staggering rise in personal bankruptcies shows. The debt system exacts a deadly toll of broken homes, shattered personal relationships, massive feelings of inadequacy and even suicide. But, the tide of evictions, mortgage foreclosures, re-possession and the garnisheeing of wages continues to rise.

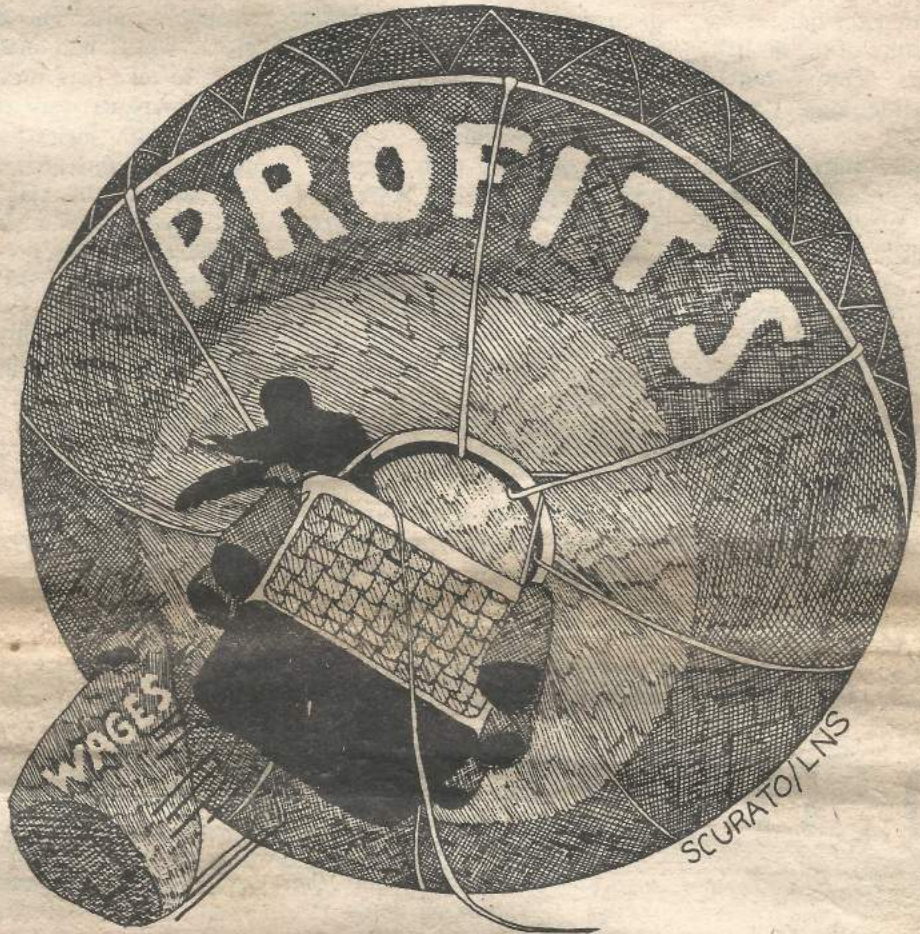
Faced with this economic squeeze it is a continuing source of wonder that approximately 85% of all debtors repay their loans under the terms of the original agreement. Of the remaining number almost 10% respond to very low level harassment such as the first letter from a collection agency. The remaining 5% however, and especially the hard-core 2% of debtors who are commonly written off

as bad debts, wage a silent and isolated battle against the demands of capital.

The "official view" of these hard-core "deadbeats" asserts that there is a very low level of resistance among debtors. They are characterized as being apathetic and "morally defeated" seeking to adapt rather than to resist. Occasionally they may refuse to pay or fight back to break the tension before slipping back into apathy. Obviously it is in the interests of creditors and collection agencies to promulgate and maintain these stereotypes but how close are they to the truth?

Happily, as a presentation to the recent Blue Collar Conference in Hamilton showed, these stereotypes bear little resemblance to reality. The report revealed that active resistance is much more pronounced than apathy. This active resistance is divided into three basic although intermingled types: 1) Refusal to pay; 2) Striking back; and 3) Confrontation. Debtors habitually attempted to make life more bearable by evasion and resistance to collection agencies attempts to stereotype them as lazy, feckless and useless. The responses varied from detached amusement to bitter denial.

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### On The Inside

#### Brenda Free!

A massive international protest has secured Brenda Earl Christie's release from a West German prison. In two articles we look at the case and its background. Page 3.

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#### Anarchist Women

We review a new book on the early anarchist-feminist movement and find some old problems. Page 8.

#### In Struggle!

##### Dissected

In part two of *On Class and Culture* B. Newbold examines the Leninist organization *In Struggle!* as a specific example of a general form of organization—the political party. Page 10.

#### Rock Around

##### The Block

Will Romania succumb to the Polish "infection?" Brian Amesly examines the potential for revolution in Romania. Page 13.

## Polish bureaucrats gather: Is The Party Over?

By Brian Amesly

The upcoming congress of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) is going to mark a critical turning in the course of events in Poland. The gathering can be expected to heighten the danger of a Soviet invasion no matter what its outcome proves to be.

The reason for this is to be seen in the emergence of a powerful reform movement at the base of the party. If the objectives of this new force are achieved the pro-Soviet character of the PUWP will be brought to a decisive end. This can be clearly seen by the types of demands its activists are putting forward.

These include the complete removal of all the staunchly pro-Soviet members of the party leadership. The demands further point towards a radical democratization of the PUWP making it a more "egalitarian" body. For instance demands have been raised to put ordinary workers in top leadership positions and to make all high party officials (shades of the "Cultural Revolution") spend part of each year working as manual labourers or ordinary office employees.

Thorough internal democracy would erode "democratic centralism" as the concentration of power in the hands of the central leadership would be severely weakened.

Indeed, consciously or not, the reform activists are in confrontation with norms which have been central tenets of the Bolshevik concept of the party ever since its initial formulation in Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*

#### Precedents Exist

Significantly, the direction undertaken by the movement is hardly a new one. It echoes the efforts to reform the Czech Communist Party during the Prague Spring. More importantly still it bears a striking resemblance to the Workers' Opposition current which clashed with the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union back in 1921.

The Workers' Opposition led by Alexandra Kollontai similarly fought for extensive democratization of the Soviet party, the practice of more egalitarian norms, trade union autonomy and against the growing bureaucracy in the one party state. For confronting the leadership over these questions it came under bitter attack from Lenin, Trotsky, Zinoviev and other powerful Bolsheviks. In the end the Workers' Opposition was effectively silenced by Lenin's resolution "On Party Unity" ending its right to exist in the party.

Whether the activists in the movement to reform the Polish

party are fully aware of these aspects historically defining their struggle is an open question. Irregardless, there can be no doubt as to just how dangerous they are in the eyes of the old men atop the Soviet Communist Party hierarchy.

The danger posed to the Soviet system is so acute because it exists within the larger context of the general situation in Poland. This is so because should the reform movement achieve any major degree of success the party will become an institution over which the USSR will have little or no control. The last line of defense for controlling things will have evaporated leaving the armies of the Warsaw Pact as the only option left.

But if the present leadership manages to defeat the reform movement this will increase the tension in Poland by further alienating the general population from the regime. The potential for more strike waves and other forms of protest will sharply rise.

A compromise solution satisfying both the leadership of the PUWP and the reform movement is hard to conceive. Even if one results it will be no guarantee of stability. The growing dissatisfaction on the part of Poland's "friends" at Kania's failure to restore order makes this clear. The USSR would rather

invade than accept a solution satisfactory to the reform movement.

#### Soviet Dilemma

For the Soviets the situation presents an almost hopeless dilemma. The best solution for them would be to have their staunchest allies in the PUWP wrest control of the leadership then proceed with naked repression against the wave of "counter-revolution". This is not possible without Warsaw Pact tanks.

Ominously, there have been indications that the Politbureau of the Soviet Communist Party barely decided against an invasion in an internal vote last December. In the time since then it is hard to believe that the patience of the Soviet leadership has not worn very thin. More distressing still is the fact that the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia occurred on the eve of a Czech party congress where communism "with a human face" was about to be institutionalized.

Faced with this growing threat of Soviet intervention Poland's militant workers will have to show no signs of their being on the defensive. Their willingness to fight their oppressors has been and will continue to be the key to new victories and the strongest deterrent to the Soviet threat.



Shortly before we went to press with NAA10 we received word that the Libertarian Workers Group had disaffiliated from the ACF (For details see Pg. 12). We were saddened but not surprised by this development and the day-to-day tasks of getting the paper ready for distribution tended to push it into the background. Very shortly afterwards, however, we learned that Other Vices and the Syndicalist Alliance had withdrawn their applications for affiliation and shortly after that Bread and Roses decided to disaffiliate.

The disaffiliated groups had been among the most active and consistent supporters of the newspaper and they had also been groups which had shared our general opinion of what was wrong with the ACF as a revolutionary organization. Given the fact that several other affiliates had only been passive members of the Federation for quite some time the departure of the disaffiliating groups represented a fundamental ideological shift within the ACF.

This ideological shift forced us to re-consider our own affiliation with ACF a question that was further complicated by the fact that we were the co-production groups for the NAA. We decided that political considerations must come first and the question of whether or not we, as autonomous groups, were still sufficient political agreement with the remaining ACF groups to continue our membership had to be dealt with before we discussed the fate of the newspaper. The

discussions which followed made it clear that no-one in either group was in favour of remaining within the ACF and both groups decided to disaffiliate.

The question then arose — what happens to the NAA? We decided that we had three options: 1) Cease publication immediately; 2) Offer the paper to one of the remaining ACF groups; or 3) Continue to publish as an independent Anarchist newspaper.

The option of immediately ceasing publication was seriously considered. After almost two years of producing the NAA we were ready to see the responsibility for producing it move on to

another group. The only ACF group which had made a firm offer to take over production of the newspaper was Bread and Roses. With their disaffiliation they informed us that they could only assume this task if it was understood that there would be a considerable delay between their acceptance of this task and their ability to perform it. We thought that such a delay could well prove terminal and as we think that the NAA project has intrinsic merit in itself, regardless of what becomes of the ACF, we decided that we would be willing to produce the paper as an independent Anarchist newspaper for at least another

year at which time our commitment to the project would be re-assessed. We also decided to change the name of the paper from the **North American Anarchist** to **STRIKE!**

The option of offering the paper to one of the remaining ACF groups was also considered but rejected. As noted above only Bread and Roses had expressed any interest in assuming the task and we felt it highly unlikely that any of the remaining groups would be willing or able to continue publishing the NAA in its present format. As well the disaffiliated groups had provided the major sources of copy and

finances making the NAA's viability as an ACF newspaper highly suspect.

We have been informed that the remaining ACF groups plan to continue as a Midwest federation of Anarchist groups and they intend to issue their own publication in the near future. To assist them in this project we have provided them with copies of the NAA's subscription and bulk mailing lists.

The groups which disaffiliated from the ACF do not plan to launch any new organizational initiative in the immediate future. We feel a different strategy for workers' revolution is needed than that put forward by either the ACF or SRAF before it. We had begun to articulate this strategy within the ACF in recent months and we will continue to develop and promote this strategy in the pages of **STRIKE!** We remain committed to an active, effective and unified Anarchist revolutionary organization in North America but, the decline of the ACF, and the specific manner in which it declined, have given us pause. We feel the lessons of the SRAF/ACF experience must be fully absorbed and evaluated before a new organization can be built on solid foundations. We intend to explore these issues in upcoming issues of **STRIKE!** In the meantime we invite your comments and criticisms.

**STRIKE!**

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## LETTERS TO STRIKE!

### Dog's Dinner

Dear **STRIKE!**,

I always thought that one of the more principled aspects of anarchist thought was the idea to respect other people's right to make up their own minds and to make their own decisions about doing things. But this does not seem to be part of the outlook of Lazarus Jones, as expressed in his article concerning El Salvador in your March/April issue.

Jones denounces the guerrillas as "a dog's dinner of Marxist-Leninist factions", and says that there is little for "anarchists to cheer about."

First of all, the Salvadorean people are experiencing some of the worst oppression in the world. And while that does not mean that they are automatically virtuous, I think that they have the right to choose whatever means they want to topple the fascist military regime. If they happen to follow a path which is not inherently what we would like, it is arrogant for relatively privileged anarchists to go on a sectarian rampage. After all, the revolutionary movement in El Salvador has the genuine support of the majority of people there, which is more than we anarchists can claim.

Secondly, the Salvadorean struggle is an anti-imperialist one, and as such is of benefit to the world as a whole. National self-determination may not be the only social goal, but is a valuable and necessary one.

If one accepts Jones' contention that a people's victory will only result in a government "equally vicious" as the current junta and their rich backers, then it follows

that one shouldn't support the revolution. This is no doubt just what Reagan and his lackeys want to happen.

The point is that Jones has offered no proof that his fears about the post-Duarte regime are valid. If the result would be a Bolshevik-type regime, that would be another matter. Not all "revolutions" deserve support. But if the change in Nicaragua after the overthrow of Somoza is any guide, and I think it is, then the Salvadoreans deserve our support.

It is *their* revolution, they are fighting a bloody fascist regime supported by the American imperialists, and their goals, even if they do not go far enough, are without a doubt more humane and progressive than found in most societies.

That's a lot to cheer about, Lazarus.

In solidarity,  
George Peterson

### Mousie Dung

Dear **STRIKE!**

In *The Tragedy in El Salvador*, (May-June) "Diego" ostracized the Salvadorean Left and leftism in general on the premise that Left movements inevitably sell out to either U.S. or Soviet imperialism.

He furnished examples of blundered left-wing national liberation movements that transferred countries from one imperialist bloc to the other: Cuba ("from the U.S. to the Russian bloc"), Vietnam ("U.S. to Russia"), and Vietnam ("RUSSIA TO U.S.") among others.

His theory is misconstrued, however, because his analysis of the

Chinese experience is inadequate.

What about the 16 or more years BETWEEN the time China broke with Soviet bossism and the time it entered the U.S. war bloc?

During 16 years of genuine national independence, the proletarian leadership in the Chinese communist party eliminated starvation, hunger and even food rationing, led the masses in struggle against state-capitalists and elitists inside the party (the Cultural Revolution) and transformed China's economy from dependence on foreign capital to self-sufficiency.

It was that self-sufficiency that allowed China to defy both U.S. and Soviet imperialism for as many years as it did.

The real national liberation and improved standard of living won by the Chinese people put the lie to Diego's assertions that "...the Left cannot give anything to the working class except more work, more belt-tightening, more discipline, more militarism" and "These countries never achieved any 'independence' or 'socialism.'"

The ruination of China's revolution was not predestined. It resulted from a military coup by rightist elements inside the Party who usurped the revolution, set themselves up as a bureaucratic bourgeoisie and surrendered the country to imperialism.

Mao tse-tung did not fail!

In struggle,  
Don McAninch

### Nit Picking?

Dear **STRIKE!**

Just now got Number 9 and read *El Salvador: What About Revolution?* Did read before I got Number 9 the criticisms of it in Number 10. Yes, you made a few errors in your article, but you did correctly and very clearly point out the game in El Salvador so fuck all your little faults. And what about critics? Nit picking bullshit (even your reply if I believe my memory)!!! Fuck Marx and

Bakunin too what do you recommend we do about the truth assholes of El Salvador? You talked about everything else (even in your article), but what to do about it? People are dying and you argue about who it is worse to be killed by and stupidity about Marx and Bakunin (who in the final analysis were both brilliant geniuses). Man, brother, PLEASE give me a break OK? Yes in El Salvador we have a problem whatever it calls itself, but we also got to have a solution for it or a defense against it. Until a major capitalist power collapses (must and can only be Amerikkka obviously) the people cannot win in South Amerika. My suggestion as a solution is that we give all the support we can to the "revolutionary" forces in El Salvador while we criticize the shit out of them. In the process we help the people of El Salvador and all of the oppressed people in the world by raising the consciousness and level of struggle in the Western World still free of "Marxists" and "Socialists." Your way only plays in their hands and is suicidal for all the people worldwide, which includes us Anarchists.

The "Marxists" and "Socialists" are educating the people in El Salvador as they have since Lenin usurped power intentionally or otherwise. We must be ready when the Social Revolution jumps off to help the people remain victorious. We must as quickly as possible bring Amerikkka down and assume the role Russia would have played had the people won. No support to any government ever, but support to the most progressive faction in the struggle for power. In this struggle the "Marxist" are the most progressive faction. The people aren't stupid. They see or will see, especially after the "Marxists" are done with them, what's what and whose who, but if they get no support that's better. It is or will be hopeless to do more than accept what is until better times. While we still can we must educate and agitate as peacefully, as non-

violently as possible. The game my fellow comrades is for keeps, the universe or death. We must put aside our bullshit and come together. We must not scream "OVERTHROW" etc. We must speak of dismantlement. The people in North America especially will understand and support it

Love and Rage  
Carl Harp.

San Quentin, California.

### Cult Or Movement?

Dear Friends;

A couple weeks ago I got my first two copies of NAA in the mail. I always breathe a sigh of relief when I get an anarchist paper: "Whew—still alive." Appropriate that one of them was No. 9, with Frank Steven's *North American Anarchism: Cult or Movement?* Over the last year of trying like hell to get in touch with other anarchists (after deciding I was one myself), I've often asked the same question. It's time for professed anarchists to address it honestly, without bullshitting themselves and each other.

It looks to me like Stevens is optimistic when he gives the choice as "movement or cult". It seems that anarchism is at best a scattered intellectual tendency, and at worst it doesn't even rate as a cult. It's a self-indulgent game for retired politico-hippies who get off on seeing their names in print. Like wow, man, it's groovy to the max to call ourselves anarchists and carry black flags at demonstrations (I do it myself). It's oh-so-inspiring to identify ourselves with the Great Tradition of Bakunin and Goldman and Durrutti. And it's really cute to write "Theses on Groucho Marxism" and put down the only socialist movement that's gotten anywhere in the last hundred and fifty years, even if it hasn't come through on its promises.

What the fuck are we doing besides talking? What use is all the

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# West German Authorities Capitulate: Massive protest frees Brenda

*This was Brenda's first visit to Germany. When this was pointed out to the authorities they curtly remarked: "If you can prove that, you can go free." Now how is it possible to prove that one was not in a country over 11 years ago?*

By Henry Pezet

British Anarchist Brenda Earl Christie was saved from an up to nine month term in a West German prison, awaiting trial on a fictitious charge, by a truly heartening international display of solidarity. The massive protests and demonstrations on Brenda's behalf caused the prosecutor in charge of her case to remark: "I've never known a case where there have been so many protests in so short a time."

Brenda had been visiting relatives in the British forces stationed in Germany and was arrested when she attempted to board a flight home with her child. She was arrested on an 11 year old warrant! The charge was that she had purchased a ticket in Frankfurt for a passenger (that never was) who placed an explosive device on an Iberia jetliner. This was at a time when the First of May Group waged a series of attacks on Spanish interests as a protest against Franco's execution of political opponents of his regime. The main point was that this was Brenda's first visit to Germany. When this was pointed out to the authorities they curtly remarked: "If you can prove that, you can go free." Now how is it possible to prove that one was not in a country over 11 years ago?

Brenda (the companion of Scottish Anarchist Stuart Christie) was brought to a West German prison near Frankfurt while her baby was taken to an institution. It is safe to assume that the child was innocent seeing as how the warrant was issued over eight years before she was born. Fortunately friends were soon able to take the child home. Brenda was imprisoned for nine days, but the protests rolled in at such an unbelievable pace that the embarrassed German authorities soon declared that she had been "cleared."

Among the many protests that rolled in was a letter to the German ambassador in Madrid from the Catalan CNT: "Thousands of

Spanish trade unionists and their families, including all our older members, could be arrested on grounds like this if travelling in 'ex' fascist countries," it said. "We were all automatically accused by Franco of similar charges. If the charges can go back 11 years, they can go back forty years — when we were taking illegal action against German Fascism."

The question that arises is why was Brenda charged at this time? There was no reason whatsoever to wait all this time if the warrant had really existed. During the Angry Brigade trial, this matter (the bombing), was raised in regards to Stuart but was quickly disposed of. Brenda was not accused at that time. Having waited for over a decade how could the prosecutor expect to produce conclusive identification now?

There are two possible reasons. **The Christie File**, Stuart's autobiography, has recently been published and the British police were furious at some of the allegations and revelations made concerning their activities. In fact a meeting of those police officers involved was held at Scotland Yard to discuss what, if anything, could be done about the book. They were also looking like complete idiots over their failure to prosecute Stuart for the booklet **Towards A Citizen's militia** after Tory MP's and on Labour MP had called for it to be banned and Cienfuegos Press closed down. Could all of this have been the result of spite and maliciousness on their part?

There is another possibility. Recently the West German State has been under criticism for allowing a proliferation of fascist-type terrorist groups to operate freely throughout the country. Perhaps they wished to show that they were vigilantly stopping terrorism — but didn't want to take action against the fascists. History seems to always want to come full circle.



Brenda Christie Earl and her daughter Branwen

## Brenda's arrest in historical perspective

**THE INCIDENT** On 19 May this year Brenda Earl, a 30 year old libertarian publisher based in Orkney, and her two year old daughter Branwen Christie were detained at Hanover Airport as they were boarding a Gatwick bound flight following a three week holiday in Germany where they had been staying with Brenda's sister-in-law. Both mother and daughter were held by the Federal Border Police when the Central Police Computer in Wiesbaden indicated that Brenda was wanted on a warrant issued against her 11 years previously in Frankfurt. This was the first indication anyone had that such a warrant existed. It came as an even greater shock as this was the first time Brenda had visited Germany. The Federal Police took great delight in tormenting Brenda while she was being detained at the airport with the threat that she would have to spend many many years in a German prison and that her daughter would be grown up by the time she was released. Even if the charge was eventually thrown out of court she would still have to spend up to nine months before the case was tried.

**THE CHARGE** That on 28 April, 1970, someone using the name Earl bought a ticket in Cologne for an Iberia Airways flight from Frankfurt to Barcelona. This ticket, in the name of a Spaniard called Santos, was used to check-in a piece of luggage on an Iberia Airways flight on May 10, 12 days later. This piece of luggage contained an incendiary device. Shortly after the luggage was checked-in a warning telephone call was made to the airport authorities, the bag was identified and removed to a remote section of the airport. Similar events occurred at approximately the same time at other major European airports, including Geneva, Brussels and Heathrow. Donald Lidstone, a senior member of the Home Office Explosives Department at Woolwich Arsenal described the devices as follows: "...after giving off an intensely hot flame for a second and a half, it then gave off a large amount of black smoke". None of the devices

were on the planes when they went off, as all services had been notified before departure time. The responsibility for the attacks were claimed by the Iberian Federation of Libertarian Youth (FIJL) as part of an international campaign against Spanish tourism and the execution and torture of Spanish anti-fascists. This organisation had been carrying out anti-Francoist activities outside of Spain since the end of World War II and none of these propagandist activities involved injury or loss of life to anyone.

**THE EVIDENCE** The use of the name Earl and a counter clerk who allegedly claims to be able to recognize the ticket buyer—after 11 years.

**THE BACKGROUND** Brenda Earl was thoroughly investigated by Scotland Yard Special Branch and the Airport Police at Heathrow (X Division) for alleged involvement in this same series of incidents within a few days of the event occurring—11 years ago! Shortly after the incident occurred at Heathrow (and elsewhere) the home of Brenda Earl and her husband, Stuart Christie, was raided at 6:00 am, a few minutes after Stuart Christie had left for work. Having waited until Stuart had gone, they gained entrance to the flat by sending a woman to ring the front door bell. Brenda, who was still in bed at the time, went to the window and looked out to see who it was. "Please, Brenda, let me in...it's urgent...I'm in terrible trouble. I want to see Stuart." Brenda put on her dressing gown and rushed downstairs to open the door. As she did she was pushed aside by a dozen male detectives who had been hiding round the corner. They dragged Brenda upstairs and ran straight into the flat, ransacking all the belongings, smashing open locked doors as well as the electricity meter. When Brenda protested she was told by one policeman not to worry "You are not going to see these fucking things for at least twenty years." They did not allow her to get dressed in private but stood watching while she did so—the woman

detective having disappeared at this juncture. They even stood at the open door when she went to the toilet. After a great deal of violence both verbal and physical (which was later the subject of a police inquiry—which came to nothing, as was to be expected), Brenda was taken off to West Drayton police station where they kept her in solitary confinement without access to any legal advisers for the rest of the day, trying to pressure her into making a confession implicating both herself and Stuart in the incidents. She was put on an identify parade which turned out to be negative and as there was nothing anywhere to link either Stuart or herself with any of the incidents she was released. Scotland Yard claimed that Brenda had been the person who bought the ticket used in the Heathrow incident at a London travel agency on 24 April (4 days before the Cologne ticket was purchased) and that she was directly involved in checking-in the luggage with the incendiary device at Heathrow on May 10th. Fortunately, both Brenda and Stuart were having lunch with friends on May 10 when the news broke and a neighbour, a police Inspector, had been chatting to them earlier that same morning. Also, because of the constant surveillance on Stuart Christie, Brenda and their flat (they were considered prime suspects because of their well-known and documented anti-fascist and anti-Francoist activities) and the extremely long hours Stuart was working on the Gas Conversion contract at the time (14/16 hours a day), friends who worked with Stuart and who were constant visitors to the flat during this period—none of them politically involved in any way, simply workmates—have quite a vivid memory of the period and to the best of their recollections of Brenda being abroad nor did she ever mention visiting Germany. The first time Brenda visited Germany was on 28 April 1981. Later, in 1970, both Stuart and Brenda were both questioned on many occasions by Special

See Brenda Pg. 12





# A Challenge to the Prison Movement



The following article was submitted to us anonymously under the title, *Revolution In The Prisons? A Challenge To Anarchists And The Prison Movement*, and while we are not in full agreement with the sentiments and opinions expressed we feel it deserves a wider audience. Prisons and penal servitude are the products of capitalist social relationships and our opposition to prisons is based upon this fact. This opposition is not dependent on the presence or lack of "revolutionary consciousness" among prisoners but solely on the fact that prisons represent the capitalist response to overwhelmingly capitalist produced problems. Our opposition to prisons as a "cure" for anti-social behaviour is therefore an integral part of our generalized opposition to capitalism. As such we cannot endorse the author's call to abandon anti-prison work. We invite comments and criticisms of this article from anyone interested or active in anti-prison work.

The history of the revolutionary struggle since the Industrial Revolution has always included active opposition to the steady development of modern penal institutions, and for very good reason. The prisons of the nineteenth and twentieth century have unquestionably been instruments of class coercion and terror, wielded selectively against the poor, the uneducated, the minorities, the people, in short, those most systematically victimized already by the structure and operation of economic and social institutions.

In recent years, it has become axiomatic among socialists, anarchists and communists alike, that prisoners represent the "most oppressed", a potential vanguard group of "natural rebels" against class society. The entire spectrum of the left, even those who in theory reject the concepts of vanguards and hierarchies of oppression, have in practice devoted a disproportionately large amount of time, energy and resources to the prison movement, often to the exclusion of issues which more immediately affect their own lives.

The ideological underpinnings, or perhaps more correctly the rhetorical ones, for this devotion to prisoners can be located in the slogans of early twentieth century radicals. Nor are slogans such as Eugene Debs' "as long as there is a soul in prison I'm not free", or the

Wobblies' "we're in here for you, and you're out there for us" by their nature untrue.

However, in that era, when huge numbers of poor people who were actively engaged in the social struggle relating to their own oppression were incarcerated, the relation between inside and outside — and the obligations owed by the movement to prisoners — were quite unambiguous. The same can be said of prisoners in Franco's Spain, for example, or of any number of people imprisoned in the U.S. for objecting to the war in Vietnam.

This article is being written, however, because both social conditions and the nature of prison support work have changed in recent years. To put it bluntly, we are writing this because we can no longer silently accept the uncritical idolatry, the slavish devotion, the emotional and physical rape, the insane violence, manipulation and brutality which have come to characterize the prison movement in North America over the past decade.

We are tired of being threatened and denounced as "counter-revolutionary" when we refuse to drop everything to wait on "political prisoners" whose political practice goes no deeper than writing endless reams of empty rhetoric in their daily missives to the outside.

To be a "political prisoner" requires more than a glib pen and an easy familiarity with the jargon of a particular political tendency. The kind of support people in for political "crimes" deserve may be quite different from the support given to other prisoners. If we are honest with ourselves we must admit that there is a difference between an Alexander Berkman and some perennial stick-up man who gets caught robbing a gas station and then 'converts' to anarchism or some other political tendency while in prison.

Make no mistake. We are absolutely committed to the abolition of all prisons, to the creation of a society in which prisons, courts, guards and police will have no function. But in such a society, when crimes are committed against one's fellows, they will be dealt with, perhaps not too dissimilarly from the way they were dealt with in primitive societies, in a direct and unmediated way, considered too 'radical' in bourgeois society.

We do support aid to prisoners whose crimes were politically motivated in a clear-cut way (not including shooting into crowds on the freeway or bombing supermarkets full of people trying to get groceries for dinner). We also recognize the possibility that even the worst individual might come to a real political awakening in prison, although this would surely include an understanding of his own crimes and not simply excuses for them framed in political terms. And we think that all prisoners — from shoplifters to murderers — must be treated in the most humane way we can force the state to treat them in its institutions now.

But it is also time to realize that prisoners whose crimes have victims rather than being "natural rebels", are the types of individuals who in a classless, prisonless society would be exiled at the very least, and more likely put out of their misery by the victims or survivors of their brutality. Nor is this entirely untrue for the perpetrators of 'victimless' or 'revolutionary' crimes. Far too often, for example, "expropriation" of goods has meant also endangering the lives and security of others considered "comrades", without even informing them that they might be at risk.

Putting aside all the liberal romanticism about prisoners as simple victims of class injustice, we must cope with the fact that most prisoners are inside for acts which they did in fact commit. Without for a moment recognizing the legitimacy of the state and its legal

**One of the romantic illusions of the movement is that prisons are the 'breeding grounds for revolutionaries.' The prisoner, ground down by life and subjected to the most absolute degradation in class society, is forged into a tough, unbreakable rebel.**

system that judges these acts, we must nevertheless recognize that many of the "comrades" who appeal so fervently to our compassion and sense of justice, have never themselves had the slightest concern for the rights, feelings, desires or even lives of others.

In a society where "dog-eat-dog" is elevated to national policy, these "rebels" represent the most abysmally inept yet enthusiastic practitioners of the morality of that order. Thus it is only natural that when they are put in prison, stripped of all power, they naturally seek to regain it by the only means available: imposing their wills on outside supporters.

This article, however, is not intended to focus solely on the role of the prisoners, because by themselves their significance is limited. It is extremely important to examine the psychological relationship of prisoners to authority, since in general it is quite the opposite of the "natural rebel" mythology. Equally important, though, are the factors which have created the base for the prison movement outside, and the many disturbing factors which have become apparent within it.

## ROOTS OF THE CONTEMPORARY PRISON MOVEMENT

The contemporary prison movement has its roots in the civil-rights and anti-war movement and the prison uprisings of the late 1960's. Not only did the civil rights and anti-war movements find many of their numbers behind bars, but it was also predictable that this experience and the generalized social revolt which characterized the era would not leave prisons undisturbed. In addition, the combination of a militant black movement outside (especially the Black Panther Party), which had its roots in the same social milieu which is most highly represented in the prisons, made it natural that much of the leadership and inspiration for prison revolts

would come from that quarter. This, combined with the presence of a higher-than-usual number of political types in prisons, made prison revolts almost inevitable.

The most famous single figure emerging from that period was George Jackson. An undeniable giant of a man, Jackson had a long history of small-time violent crimes for which he was serving an indeterminate one year to life sentence. After ten years in prison, he had become a self-educated "revolutionary theoretician", well-read in a wide variety of revolutionary and guerrilla writings, and brilliantly articulate both on paper and in person. He was also known to be extremely charming and charismatic.

Thanks to the efforts of a group of Bay Area lawyers and Angela Davis (almost all of them Communist Party hacks or sympathizers), George Jackson's reputation spread far and wide, combining what was real with what was legally expeditious, even if totally fictitious. In an article in the March 1981 issue of *New West* magazine about Fay Stender (one of the main lawyers involved in Jackson's case), some less-well known facts about Jackson were also revealed.

Like almost all of the leaders of the Black Panther Party who ended up in jail, notably Huey P. Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, Jackson was a gangster supreme (to the extent possible in the joint). According to the authors of the article, Jackson was at the center of drug-dealing, ass-peddling, and all the other rackets of prison life. He also boasted of having killed 12 people inside, a fact which is unprovable but at least highly suggestive of a brutal and authoritarian bent.

The fact that Jackson was not alone in his duality of roles, hero and rogue, is aptly demonstrated by others who have emerged from prison only to find Jesus and a fast buck, or to return to the streets better equipped than ever to terror-

**The entire spectrum of the left, even those who in theory reject the concepts of vanguards and hierarchies of oppression, have in practice devoted a disproportionately large amount of time, energy and resources to the prison movement, often to the exclusion of issues which more immediately affect their own lives.**



ize, exploit and defraud not "the Man" but their neighbors, co-workers and families. The "Alfalfa Sprout Wars" in the Bay Area a few years ago, in which ex-prisoners and prisoner support people shot it out on numerous occasions to see which faction would control local food co-ops, and the Oakland Panthers' involvement in drug dealing and extortion rackets, are just a few examples of the dubious "politics" of many "revolutionary prisoners".

We believe that Jackson's writings were, in fact, entirely consistent with the view of Jackson as an authoritarian gangster and not as hero of the liberation struggle. He was an avowed Marxist-Leninist, whose heroes were Lenin, Mao, Ho Chi Minh and Guevara. His main revolutionary vision was one of an apocalyptic firestorm of guerrilla battles in the slums, in which blacks and their supporters would be the revolutionary vanguard, putting the Man to death. There was precious little of any vision in his writings of what a new society might consist of. Nor were many of his actions in relation to his outside supporters inconsistent with his own descriptions of his politics. "Politics is my hustle" was a comment not infrequently repeated to his supporters. Unfortunately, some, like Fay Stender, never took him seriously.

Until about 1977 virtually all prison movement ideology was Marxist-Leninist, with its standard baggage of Third World vanguardism and the added component of "prisoner leadership". Much of the urban guerrilla movement in the U.S., from the formation of the B.L.A. in the late 60's, through the S.L.A., N.W.L.F., and onto the G.J.B. in the mid-70's, was also based on this basic analysis.

Then, around 1977, when the Marxist-Leninists were drifting into a period of internal dissolution and the urban guerrilla groups were increasingly taking on the characteristics of street gangs, *The Open Road* appeared. For the first time in many years in North America, there was a widely circulated anarchist journal which gave enthusiastic support to prisoners and urban guerrillas. Furthermore, Joe Remiro and Russ Little, who were widely respected by both those inside and outside who were inclined toward the guerrilla solution to prisons, came out as anarchists. So it was only natural that prisoners and the prison movement, sensing that anarchism might be the leftist political tendency on the ascent, began to cultivate "anarchist" ideas and language in order to maintain maximum outside contacts and support.

The underlying Marxist-Leninist, authoritarian and totally vanguardist assumptions did not change in the slightest, however. Only the rhetoric differed. Thus the disgusting spectacle arose of prisoners routinely writing to libertarian papers, advocating the overthrow of the state and the class system, and the establishment of *Anarchist Rule!*

One other interesting development which gradually occurred during this period had to do with the sexual composition of the prisoner support movement. The prison support movement has always had a high percentage of women, and has worked primarily with men's prisons. One might expect that the rise of feminism within the left might have led to a decline in the number of women, and/or a change in focus toward working more with women in prison.

Somewhat disturbingly, nothing of the kind happened. While some women in the prison movement have begun to get involved with women as well as men in prison, the emphasis remains on men's prisons. Equally disturbing is the fact that so many of the women

involved in the prison movement are lesbians. Here is a contradiction so widespread and rationally incomprehensible that it is no surprise that discussion of this dynamic is totally unheard of within the prison movement.

Romanticism seems to be a major factor in the relationship, particularly between male prisoners and female supporters. Who but a prisoner can give such total and undivided attention in a relationship, what other relationship can be constantly at such an unbelievably high level of emotional intensity? Men on the outside have jobs, other friends, and so on. But

learned contempt for bourgeois morality and can thereby be counted upon to oppose it at every turn. So the myth goes.

Unfortunately, this is not supported at all by reality. Prison is the most oppressive and authoritarian institution in this society, and its main function is to create authoritarian personalities. That's why fascists make not only the best guards, but also the best prisoners.

It is hardly new that the authoritarian personality contains two mirror-images within it, both almost invariably present within a single person. The often-quoted

and authority over others. Charlie Manson is the prototype of the authoritarian personality created by prisons. Sadly enough, many of the past and present "leaders" of the prison movement inside the prisons are of the same variety. But they are the more dangerous because they disguise their megalomania with revolutionary slogans, using this hustle to gain support where none would otherwise be forthcoming.

Thus we have, for example, Carl Harp, the latest "anarchist" hero in the international prison movement. For several years now, Harp has been cranking out

doubt also used to spur people to political action) and yet can't recognize the transparency of this conversion?

In an interview after his conviction for the Bellevue Sniper case, Harp admitted to having raped two women (he held a pistol to their heads) who were enjoying an afternoon hike in the woods. He said, "I'm not sorry I did it, but I'm sorry it occurred." He also talked of his plans to become a noted writer, or artist, or cartoonist, and he talked of his belief in god. There was not the slightest sign of contrition, but there was abundant evidence of an intention to get people to pay attention to him, by whatever scam would prove to be most effective. Clearly, anarchism turned out to be the right choice.

That Carl Harp is a very victimized individual, who has had a rotten life and has felt the full force of this deadly society, is without a doubt true. That Carl Harp has even in his limited way tried to absorb some libertarian notions and put them into practice inside is possible and certainly to his credit. But the idea of Carl Harp as an authentic anarchist resistance hero, whose case should become an international cause celebre, is an idea that makes us physically ill, and makes us doubt the sanity of some of our comrades.

What is most disturbing about this case is the fact that it is not the exception, but the rule as far as the relationship of prisoners and supporters is concerned. Over and over again, the prison movement readily jumps to the support of prisoners and makes heroes of them, merely because the prisoner is spouting a convincing line of right-on rhetoric. Where is the case of a prison "revolutionary" who can articulate any positive vision of a revolutionary society, or who comes out of prison and leads a life which doesn't victimize his family, friends, and neighbors, let alone which involves struggle for a more meaningful life or a different society? Amazingly enough, against all odds we believe there probably are some such individuals, but one doubts they are counted among the "heavies" of the prison movement.

Fay Stender was one of the people who said the hell with it, after many years at the service of the "greats" in the prison revolutionary set. As she watched these "revolutionaries" get back on the streets, where they reverted to gangland activities, got recycled back into prison, or shot each other, she gave it up and turned her attention elsewhere.

In May 1979, an ex-con with a long record and an urge for a "heavy rep" broke into her apartment in the middle of the night. After forcing her to write a "confession" of her "betrayal" of George Jackson and the prison movement (the nature of which betrayal was apparently as nebulous to the assailant as to Fay Stender), he gunned her down, leaving her permanently crippled. A year later she killed herself, rather than living a life ridden with fear and dismay over her own past and threatened future.

Nor was Fay Stender's story unusual. The Bay Area for years has had a bizarre series of plots involving its "urban guerrillas", the prison movement, the left, the gangsters both black and white. The incidence of dead radicals, whose bullet-riddled bodies turn up in the morgue there with disturbing frequency, might be understandable if they were dying in pitched battles with the police, as happens elsewhere. But they don't. They fall victim to their own "Revolutionary Forces", "People's Justice", and all the other lame labels with which they See Challenge Pg. 14

**Make no mistake.  
We are absolutely committed to the abolition of all prisons, to the creation of a society in which prisons, guards and police will have no function.**



the prison romance is different. Each look, each stolen touch, each request, each call is charged with significance. The "heavier" the prisoner, the greater the significance. After all, any guard could destroy the delicate situation at any time. And what better opportunity for self-sacrifice (how traditionally womanly) is there? Who needs to be rescued and nurtured more than some poor guy behind bars, who is effusive in his appreciation for the smallest favor? And what greater risks can one take than to risk all one's security and life on the outside by providing him with dope, or other contraband?

It is safe to say, then, that the prison movement, whatever its political pretensions, has been a movement largely dominated by illusion and authoritarian ideology and practice, led by male authority figures and to an ever-greater extent supported by women on the outside. One could say that in that sense, it reflects the development of the rest of the left and of the structure of modern society, except in many ways the psychopathology which repeatedly surfaces within the movement must be seen as extreme even within the context of an utterly decadent society such as the one in which we live.

#### **PRISONS AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE PRISONER**

One of the romantic illusions of the movement is that prisons are the 'breeding grounds for revolutionaries'. The prisoner, ground down by life and subjected to the absolute oppression and degradation possible in class society, is thus forged into a tough, unbreakable rebel, who has

aphorism that "there is only one thing in the world more wicked than the desire to command, and that is the will to obey", is misleading, in the sense that within this personality structure both desires are constantly present, and in tension with each other, each taking dominance to varying degrees at different times. With the "commanders", this dynamic results in phenomena like the constant search among the rich and powerful for forms of sexual encounter which will result in bondage, submission or degradation under the leather boot of the prostitute.

In the prisoner, the quintessential "obeyer", the dynamic plays itself out in inverse. Forced to submit to a situation of routinized absolute powerlessness, total submission on the most mundane levels of existence, the prisoner learns the techniques of manipulation which are the only recourse of the powerless. To lie, to cheat, to swindle, to use guilt, phony sincerity, any trick at all to relieve the burden of omnipresent subjugation, becomes the natural behavior of the prisoner in order to survive on the inside. Naturally this is increased a thousand-fold when a person's entire life involves institutions, the streets, parental abuse and neglect, and all the horrors which constitute the lives of many prisoners for whom the joint is the most secure and best-known home.

The institutional model of command and obey at some point becomes internalized on the deepest levels. As a result, the prisoner seeks continuously for the opportunity to play out the other side of the duality, to experience control

volumes of letters to anarchist and libertarian organizations all over the world, telling of a "government conspiracy" to keep him in prison because of his righteous political stance. Recently his diaries and ramblings were published under the title *Love & Rage*, which is receiving critical acclaim by a wide variety of groups whose unifying bond is that none of them have had any direct contact with the man, or even know why he's in prison.

In western Washington, from which he was receiving most of his direct support while at Walla Walla, Harp has managed to totally isolate and alienate himself from virtually every group and individual who ever supported him since his 'conversion' to anarchism. Before that, no one paid any attention, because he was simply a rapist with an arm-long record of two-bit violent and sexual crimes, and the Bellevue Sniper, who killed one man and crippled another in a random shooting spree set off when an idiotic bank extortion scheme flopped.

Nor has he been "cleansed" of his past deeds by his exemplary deeds in prison. Groups who were not willing to correspond with him or get involved in his support work have received repeated denunciations couched in Maoist (not anarchist) rhetoric, accused of counter-revolutionary attitudes, and so on. And how naive or willingly ignorant do people have to be when they read yet another of his endless pamphlets (this published by a Canadian prison support group) in which he enthusiastically uses a quote from Richard Wagner (which Hitler no



# BREAD & ROSES

## Polish Feminists Organize

The latest issue of *Labour Focus On Eastern Europe* reports an exciting new development in Poland. This being the formation of the first contemporary feminist group in that country. Involving some one hundred women it was formed at the University of Warsaw this past November. Upon its formation these Polish feminists proceeded to formulate a list of twelve demands and a statement of goals which if fully realized would profoundly change the nature of existing society in Poland.

Critically, the Polish feminists want to see their demands taken up by the workers' movement. Should this be achieved without compromising the autonomy of the Polish women's movement it can only result in a decisive advance for the class struggle by deepening the challenge it presents. Furthermore, such practical unity would serve to counter-act the socially reactionary influence of the Roman Catholic Church which continues to take archaic positions on issues central to the struggle for women's liberation. It would also serve to confront political activists who seek merely to reform the present system in Poland with demands posing the necessity of a far-reaching social revolution.

At the moment the Polish feminists are appealing for resources, material and otherwise, essential to the growth of their movement. Included among the projects they have been seeking to initiate are feminist publications, theatre, a feminist art gallery and a pool of information about feminism in general. Accordingly, the Polish feminists very much desire contacts with the women's liberation movement on an international scale. Interested persons can reach and/or aid them in whatever way possible by writing to: Krytina Kowalewski, Uniwersytet Warszawski, U. Krakowski Przedmiescie 24, 00-325 Warszawa.

## Women into Trades

In the past several years a growing number of women have entered, or tried to enter, a variety of skilled and unskilled 'blue collar' occupations where traditionally only males have been trained and employed. In other industries, ranging from textiles to telephones, which employ large numbers of women in lower-paying jobs, women workers are increasingly conscious and vocal about their special problems on the job, in the union, and in the economy and society as whole.

One of the expressions of all this was the first Ontario Women in Trades and Industry Conference held in Hamilton, Canada, on April 24-26, 1981. The purpose of the April Conference was to draw together women from across the province of Ontario; working women in trades and industry, women who are pursuing vocational training for such jobs, and women who have been denied access to such jobs and training. The conference helped to establish an effective network of communication and develop an action perspective for long overdue change. It is hoped that such an exchange of information and ideas can help lead to more action to provide equal conditions for workers in the economy.

The conference drew over 130 participants from all occupations such as secretaries, millwrights, auto mechanics, students, organized and unorganized labourers.

Various workshops were held dealing with topics such as "Better Access to Jobs," "Health and Safety" and "Day-care." Panel discussions of women in various trades were presented and several speakers addressed some important issues including different forms of Working Woman's organizations and the relation between women workers and Unions. To get in touch with the ongoing activities of the Women in Trades and Industry write c/o 200 Balmoral south, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

## Classified

20¢ per word. Free for announcements and other items under fifty words in length and not involving cash exchange.

**Prison Book Project** Left Bank Books operates a "Books to Prisoners" project in which we send any book in print in the U.S. to prisoners at cost (usually 30-35% off retail price) and we pay all postage costs. Prisoners may order direct from us, or friends may write and arrange to have the books sent in. Write to: Left Bank Books, Box A, 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101, USA.

**Fun-Loving Bunch** of anarchists (3 households, 4 women and 5 men) are looking for one or two more women to join our ranks. For details write: Columbia Anarchist League, P.O. Box 380, Columbia, Missouri 65201, USA.

**Anti-Authoritarian Calendar 1982** Left Bank Books is assembling an

anti-authoritarian calendar and requests that people send in dates of interesting/important events. They also request that individuals and bookstores send in advance orders, no deposit required, so they can gauge demand. **Left Bank Books**, 92 Pike St., Seattle, WA 98101, USA.

## Mail Strike

As we put the finishing touches to the paper Canada is in the second week of a nationwide postal strike. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers has been an exceptionally militant union and the government seems determined to endure a long strike in order to cripple or smash the union. We hope that the paper is not too dated by the time it reaches you. Look for the next issue two months after you receive this one.

# Readership Survey

The response to our reader survey in NAA8 wasn't as large as we would have liked but, as a statistician friend of ours informed us, even a survey with as few as 10 responses can be considered valid. We don't make the claim that this survey is representative or that it presents an accurate picture of the North American Anarchist movement. However, the geographical diversity of the responses and some common threads, make it at least interesting and perhaps even informative.

### Sample Size: 26

**Geographical Breakdown:** U.S., 18; Canada, 4; Australia, 3; England, 1.

**Age:** The readers in our sample ranged in age from 20 to 55. Of those who chose to put their age down 14 were in their 20s, 7 were in their 30s, 2 were in their 40s and one was in his 50s.

**Sex:** 21(82%) of the respondents were male and 5(18%) were female.

**Income:** 13 listed their income as being under \$5000, 6 earned between \$5-10,000, 5 made \$10-15,000 and 2 earned more than \$15,000 per year.

**Job:** White collar, 6; Blue collar, 7; Professional, 3; Unwaged, 6; Student, 3; Unionized, 10.

**Accommodation:** Own, 2; Co-op, 2; Rent, 20.

**Sexual Orientation:** Heterosexual, 14; Gay, 1; Bisexual, 4; None of your business, 9.

**Politics:** Anarchist-Communist, 7; Syndicalist, 0; Individualist, 2; Anarchist, 6; Marxist, 1; Marxist-Leninist, 0; Liberal, 0; Fascist, 0; Autonomist, 1; Trotskyist, 1. Six people marked three or more boxes.

**Other Reading:** the *Open Road* was the most read periodical with 14 mentions. Other publications cited were *Fifth Estate* (9), *Freedom* (8), *Cienfuegos Press Review* (5), *Anarchy* (3), *Industrial Worker* (3), *Black Flag* (2), *Overthrow* (2), *Black Rose* (2), *Flashpoint*, *Soil of Liberty*, *On The Line*, *SRAF Bulletin*, *XTRA!*, *A Batalha* and *A Idea* (both from Portugal) were each mentioned once.

**Circulation:** To the question "how many people read your copy of the NAA?" nine people answered one, four people said two, seven people said three and six said four or more.

**Distribution:** When asked how they received the NAA 13 said they were subscribers, four said they bought it at a bookstore, two got it from a street-sale, six got it from friends and one person said he stole his copy from a bookstore.

**Coverage:** After arbitrarily dividing the major concerns of the paper into eight categories we asked our readers to evaluate our coverage of each area. VG—Very Good, G—Good, A—Average, P—Poor, VP—Very Poor.

**Anarchist News:** VG—4; G—12; A—6; P—0; VP—0.

**Labour:** VG—5; G—10; A—5; P—1; VP—3.

**Current Events:** VG—5; G—7; A—2; P—4; VP—2.

**Prison News:** VG—5; G—6; A—10; P—2; VP—0.

**Feminism:** VG—4; G—6; A—5; P—5; VP—0.

**Culture:** VG—2; G—2; A—7; P—5; VP—2.

**Humour:** VG—2; G—6; A—6; P—5; VP—4.

**Theory:** VG—0; G—8; A—4; P—6; VP—4.

**Subjects:** Among the subjects our readers would like to see more coverage of Anarchist history was mentioned three times and organizing was mentioned twice. Single mentions included: Sexuality; Rise of Fascism; How to live as an Anarchist; Mass Media; Autonomous Movements; Collective Living; Anarchist movement in South America; News with less boring and/or arrogant editorializing; Critiques of other organizations; Youth Struggles; Alternative Lifestyles; International Squatters Movement; Critique of Work; Gays; Music. Some of these areas have been addressed in issues appearing after the survey. We will use the others as a guide for future articles.

**Columns:** Readers were asked how often they read the various columns and features. 1—Never, 2—Sometimes, 3—Always.

**For Starters:** 1—0; 2—8; 3—16.

**Letters:** 1—1; 2—2; 3—21.

**Anarcho-Tech:** 1—2; 2—7; 3—15.

**Anarchist Feminist Notes:** 1—2; 2—5; 3—16.

**Mixed Media:** 1—2; 2—4; 3—16.

**Prison News:** 1—0; 2—7; 3—15.

**Libertarian Notes:** 1—0; 2—4; 3—19.

**Labour Pains:** 1—1; 2—6; 3—17.

**Comments:** Most people felt we were doing a good job and only wished we came out more often. There were, however, a few discouraging words. One correspondent felt that "Anarcho-Technology and Anarchist Feminist Notes are nothing more than importations of bourgeois ideology into the libertarian movement." Another correspondent informed us that our project "is vitiated by its productivist, workerist, 'organizer', ethos/ethic and overall conservatism." But, to close on an upbeat note, a person who identified himself as a Trotskyist sympathiser declared: "I am amazed at the quality of the paper." Thanks to all who took the time to participate in the survey.

# Early Christian sect opposed hierarchy

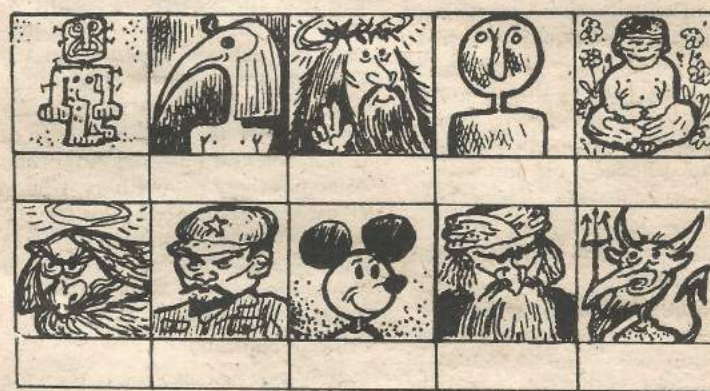
By M. Archibald

It is a recurring theme of the anarchist view of history that the most important social movements—those with the potential to liberate rather than enslave—are often those we know the least from the written record.

Such is the case with gnosticism, a variant of the Christian movement in the first and second centuries A.D. Until recently the gnostics were known almost exclusively through the violent polemics of their bitterest enemies, much as anarchism is known to a contemporary Soviet citizen only through Marxist-Leninist critiques.

In 1945 a gang of nomadic cut-throats in Upper Egypt discovered a clay jug filled with gnostic manuscripts. Some of these scraps of papyrus were subsequently used as kindling, but in due course the remainder fell into the hands of an even worse band of criminals—the international academic establishment. Hoarded by jealous scholars for decades, the texts have only recently become widely accessible. Finally we can study the gnostics on their own terms.

The first one hundred and fifty years of Christianity are generally obscure, in part because the movement was largely proletarian in character. Christianity only developed the potential to become a state religion when it moved up the social ladder and organized itself in imitation of the Roman political and military system. Evidently there was more diversity in the early movement (not yet a church)



Pick yer' poison

than the official histories would have us believe.

In comparing gnosticism with orthodox Christianity, three major differences can be discerned:

(1) The gnostics opposed bureaucracy. They rejected a hierarchy of bishops, priests, and elders. For them the only purpose for accepting authority was to learn to outgrow it.

(2) The gnostics recognized the equal participation of men and women in religious practice. The gnostic God had both feminine and masculine qualities. In some of the gnostic gospels, Mary Magdalene, far from being a woman of ill-repute as she appears in the orthodox gospels, is in fact the leading disciple of Jesus. (In one gnostic account she denounces Peter, the leading orthodox disciple, as a "hater of women".) The equality of women in the gnostic groups evidently is a reflection of the proletarian nature of the movement,

i.e. a reflection of the fact the women shared equally in manual labour. Even today in the Middle East, it is only middle class women who are veiled.

(3) The gnostics rejected doctrine and ritual. For them each person must seek for truth individually—there were no received truths, only methods for seeking truth.

Gnosticism, of course, had no future in the Roman Empire and was doomed to remain an underground current. It is important to remember that it was the gentle gnostics and not the bloodthirsty Roman emperors who were the true enemies of the early Christian Church. The martyred Christian fanatics shared a vision of a hierarchical, vertically ordered society with their Roman persecutors. In fact orthodox Christianity evolved in opposition to gnosticism much as orthodox Marxism evolved in opposition to anarchism.





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April 27, 1981

North American Anarchist  
P.O. Box 2, Station O  
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M4B 2B0

We are considering a subscription to "North American Anarchist" and would like to obtain a sample copy if possible.

In addition, please advise as to:

- 1) the cost of a one year subscription.
- 2) the frequency of the journal.

Your assistance in the above matter is greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

C. Hough

C. Hough (Mrs.)  
Corporate Strategies Department

CH/dm

## Corporate Anarchy?

A spectre is haunting the boardrooms of the nation — the spectre of Anarchism. As capitalism sinks deeper into the '80s and terminal depression it seems that at least one of our most prominent multinational corporations has its ear pressed firmly to the ground listening to the rumbles from below.

Imagine our surprise when one fine Spring morning a letter bearing the corporate logo of Shell Oil Canada dropped into our mailbox requesting a sample copy of the NAA and subscription information. And, lo and behold, this unusual request was made on behalf of the "Corporate Strategies Dept." Do they know something we don't? Is there a massive groundswell of support for Anarchism building up in the nether regions of society? Or are they just covering all their bets?

The May issue of *Mother Jones* magazine, in an article written by a man who infiltrated a strategy session for the nuclear power industry, reports that the nuclear industry regards the Friends of the Earth's publication, *Not Man Apart*, as the best source of environmentalist ideology and anti-nuclear strategy. Perhaps the oil industry sees the Anarchist movement as the best barometer of the level of revolutionary activity in North America.

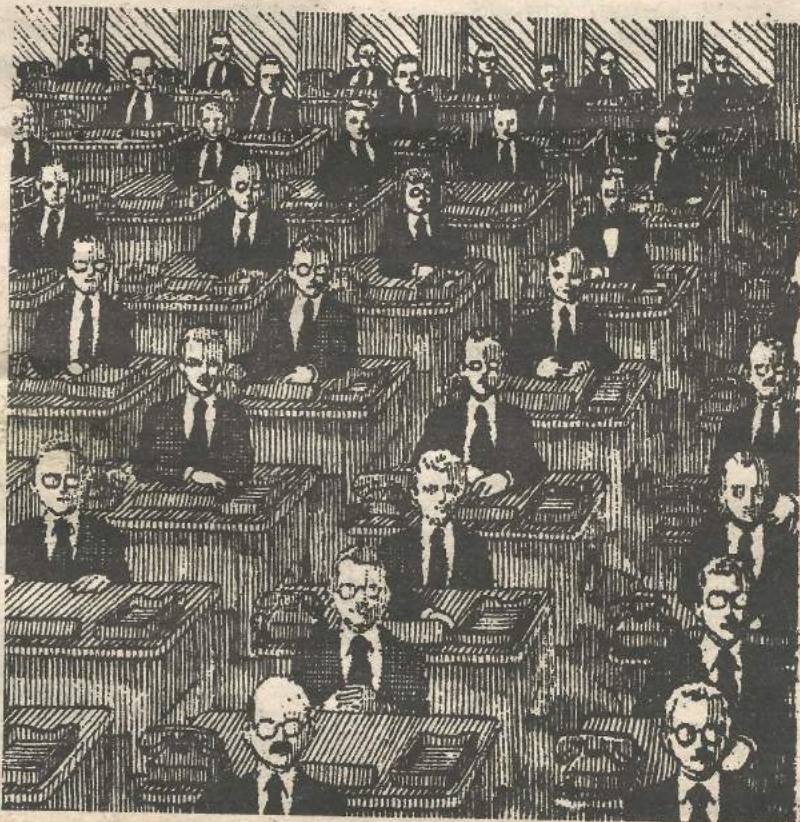
In our reply to Shell Oil we stated that our subscription rates were based on ability to pay. We charged libraries and funded organizations more than individuals and sent the paper free of charge to those who couldn't afford to pay. As we had not anticipated receiving subscriptions requests from multinational corporations we had not set a "corporate" rate. We informed Shell that they had become a "trendsetter" in yet another area by prompting us to establish a corporate rate of \$50 per annum.

We put a sample copy in the mail along with a covering letter and sat back to await a reply. A couple of weeks later, sure enough, a reply came. Enclosed was a cheque for five dollars and a xerox of the subscription ad in the sample copy we had sent them with the individual rate circle. Well, Shell Oil hadn't become one of the largest companies in the world by giving full value for goods received, so we weren't unduly surprised.

We returned their cheque with a note attached pointing out that they had been informed that the corporate rate was fifty dollars per year and if they wanted a subscription that is what it would cost. With the obscene profits the oil companies are making you would think that they could afford it.

Apparently not. A little over a week later we received another letter in which C. Hough (Mrs.), Corporate Strategies Dept., declared: "In view of the increased cost, as cited in your letter of June 9, 1981, we have decided not to subscribe to this journal. The corporate rate quoted, amounts to a ten fold increase and as such it was decided not to subscribe."

You would think the oil companies would be the last people on earth to complain about "ten fold increases" but maybe things are getting a little tight among the Seven Sisters. If there are any other corporations out there interested in the shape of things to come, and who can afford the fifty bucks, feel free to send in your subscriptions. We'd love to hear from you!



## Coffee & Donuts

The kind of bonhomie required of workers in the fast-food industry has always been a source of particular irritation for me. I've often been tempted to reply to the injunction to "Have a nice day!" with a surly "is that an order?" But like most people, I realize its just part of the job the same as speed-ups, low wages and ridiculous uniforms. The only time the whole charade becomes truly pathetic is when you run into someone who actually takes it seriously.

I was on my way home from a meeting one night recently and I decided to drop into a donut shop for a quick fix of sugar. It was around 11 o'clock and the shop was deserted except for the waitress who was sitting at the back with what appeared to be the lone customer. Upon spotting me she popped out of her chair so fast you would have thought she was spring loaded and came storming effusively down to the counter. The "Hi, how are you's, anything else's, enjoy your snack's and have a nice day's" were coming fast and furious. Slightly overwhelmed I mumbled the stock responses and retreated to a table clutching my coffee and maple donut. The waitress quickly returned to her table and resumed her interrupted conversation.

It soon became apparent that the main topic of conversation was another employee of the establishment, an older woman who worked the midnight shift. In a suprisingly nasty tone of voice the waitress, who looked to be in her early '50s, graphically described how the older woman lacked "ambition" and treated her work as "just a job." This seemed to amount to a reluctance to behave like a wind-up "happy" doll whenever there were customers around. The customer then chimed in that she also habitually gave the wrong change,

although it was obvious from the conversation that she invariably under rather than over charged the customers.

According to the waitress these qualities were fairly general among the older employees and well known to management. The only thing that saved them from being bounced out onto the street was that there had been even worse problems with younger women on the late shifts. It seemed that they quickly developed the habit of not only periodically undercharging but, horror of horrors, they actually gave out free coffee and donuts to their friends and acquaintances. In a very low voice the waitress also confided that some of them "even smoked dope" on the job.

The conversation then drifted into a discussion of the "lack of respect" for the uniform and "sloppy" work habits. The waitress' solution to this "problem" was to have management call the offender on the carpet and outline company policy to them finishing with the question "do you want to work here or not?" If the answer was affirmative the luckless employee should be given a written statement saying that he/she had been briefed on company policy and agreed to abide by it. The next offence would mean instant dismissal.

At this point a group of teenagers walked into the shop and the waitress again shot into action cheerfully joking and laughing. Thoroughly sickened I walked out. It's always depressing to see someone so wholeheartedly complicit in their own oppression. The only consolation I had was that this woman was obviously isolated from the other employees and no doubt her "ambition" would eventually place her on the proper side of the barricades. A slice of life and a cup of coffee to go please.

## Cienfuegos Canada under attack

Since the establishment of Cienfuegos Press in Canada, as well as the formation of the Ottawa Anarchist Alliance, the authorities have not taken kindly to the new and growing Anarchist presence in the "Holy Capital." Aside from the usual phone buggings and such, the most regular and annoying form of harassment has been mail tampering. This isn't just opened mail but also returned mail which is often sent back to the sender with "No such box number" scrawled on it. Other mail just seems to mysteriously disappear from the postal system. In the last two months there have been 18 cases of mail being returned to sender that we know about. Ottawa is not a city distinguished by its level of radical activity and it is more than obvious that the intention of this harassment is to ensure that Revolutionary Anarchism does not gain a foothold in this up-until-now stagnant government city. Clearly the authorities would like to see Cienfuegos Press Canada perish for lack of orders, a strategy which is beginning to pay off as exasperated subscribers end up writing to Scotland for their books (and consequently paying approximately twice the price and often having to wait up to three times longer for delivery of their orders).

We are appealing to you to please not dispose of those returned letters! The post office can play dumb as long as we can't show them the

evidence ... when we can do that the clash can commence! We are naturally aware that this practice happens everywhere, BUT WE WON'T STAND FOR IT! There is a growing interest in Anarchism and Cienfuegos Press in this city and we refuse to let the RCMP or anybody else involved put a stop to it. You can help by reporting any difficulties you have to us at (613) 233-5505. If you're really poor call collect and please make the hours more or less reasonable. We'll give you a safer address to send the returned mail to. This would be greatly appreciated. We feel too much State tampering has been taken for granted. Let's make the bastards shiver for once!

Cienfuegos Press Canada





# Anarchist Women, Processed World,

## Anarchist Women

1870-1920

Margaret S. Marsh

### Anarchist Women 1870 - 1920

Margaret S. Marsh, Temple University Press, 1981, 214 p.p.

Anarchist Women 1870-1920 by Margaret S. Marsh is an interesting and informative survey of the main features of anarchist-feminism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but at 174 pages of actual text it is a little thin considering the amount of material available and the time period covered. As a liberal academic with feminist pretensions Marsh provides a well balanced account of what distinguished the anarchist-feminists from their socialist and suffragette sisters and her treatment is fair and sympathetic throughout.

Marsh takes as her starting point the fact that over 100 years of feminist struggle has not substantially altered women's basic social inequality. Marsh recognizes that political and economic equality are necessary but not sufficient requirements for true equality and that women's domestic oppression must also be addressed. It is the anarchist-feminists early insistence on the primacy of domestic oppression which recommends them to Marsh's attention as she declares in her introduction: "The anarchist-feminists and their ideology possess a significance that extends beyond anarchism. The purpose of this study is not so much to examine anarchism through the lives of the women who espoused it as it is to understand the ways in which a group of women responded to the social, sexual, and economic upheavals of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Marsh is willing to give anarchism a sympathetic hearing but it soon becomes evident that her primary interest is to strip-mine anarchist-feminism for 'ideas and insights' while downplaying the merits of anarchism as a total critique. For Marsh the anarchist-feminists merely provide a missing ingredient in the feminist stew as she declares: "Among the anarchist women of a century ago we find the kind of serious probing of sexual and familial relationships that could serve as a preface to a new feminist analysis." Anarchism's contribution, like anarchism itself, must be firmly relegated to the past."

Accepting these limitations the reader can still glean a great deal from this book as Marsh has done a competent job in re-creating the anarchist milieu in which the anarchist-feminists moved. In particular the rampant sexism of the male anarchist movement in the period under study and its deleterious effects on the efforts of the anarchist-feminists is well documented. Like most other

radicals of the time anarchist males devoted little attention to the "Woman Question" and even when they did address the question it was either in terms of the outright advocacy of patriarchy (Proudhon) or the more insidious insistence that women must subordinate their struggle to that of the workers (Kropotkin). The only anarchist periodical which enthusiastically supported the feminists was Moses Harman's newspaper, *Lucifer*, dedicated to the "emancipation of women from sex-slavery," and as Marsh points out he was widely regarded as a crank. The reluctance of men to accept women as full and equal partners in all areas of activity was a severe limitation on the development of anarchist-feminism. As Marsh rightly observes: "If the anarchist-feminists could not even convince their own comrades, their chances of reaching a larger audience were considerably diminished."

Despite this sexism Marsh makes it clear that anarchism was still the social theory most conducive to a truly radical critique of society and women's place within it. Anarchism's emphasis on the liberty of the individual and personal autonomy provided a unique base from which to combat the sexist stereotyping of women within the radical movement and "although anarchism was by no means an expressly feminist ideology, it had the capacity to become so."

The radical sweep of anarchist-feminist ideology, especially their championing of free love and their attacks on marriage and the nuclear family, tended to isolate them even within the broader feminist movement. When Victoria Woodhull raised the issue of free love during a public speech in 1872 she was roundly denounced by such bourgeois feminists as Susan B. Anthony, of silver dollar fame, who had previously supported her in her fight for female emancipation. Anthony led the chorus of condemnation aimed at "the Woodhull" for daring to raise the issue of sexuality.

The cleavage between anarchist-feminists and the more moderate suffragettes was further deepened by the anarchist-feminists rejection of the fight for votes for women. As Voltairine De Cleyre stated, "the ballot hasn't made men free and it won't make us free." Emma Goldman was even more scathing in her rejection of female suffrage: "Suffrage is an evil, . . . it has helped enslave people, . . . it has but closed their eyes that they may not see how craftily they were made to submit."

The anarchist-feminists also had difficulty attracting women of more radical views to their movement. Most such women tended to gravitate towards the socialists rather than the anarchists. Marsh claims that this failure to attract radical women was "not only because the anarchist-feminists failed to develop a sustained feminist analysis which would encompass the problems of class conflict, poverty, and violence in society as a whole, but also because they, unlike the socialists, were unable to provide an organizational framework for their feminism."

Marsh credits the socialists with having a more thoroughly worked out theory of feminism, Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* and Bebel's *Woman Under Socialism* for example, than did the anarchists. But, she also points out, the light of historical hindsight has revealed profound flaws in these theories. Simone de Beauvoir, for example, found the Marxist

materialist position inadequate: "Historical materialism takes for granted facts that call for explanation . . . It cannot provide solutions for the problems we have raised, because these concern the whole man and not that abstraction: *Homo Economicus*."

The anarchist-feminists, by locating the locus of women's oppression in the patriarchal nuclear family and the sexual stereotyping of women in society, posed a much more profound critique than that put forward by the socialists. As Marsh concludes: "As long as women, because they are women, are principally responsible for the nurturing functions within the family and are the prime caretakers of children, their choices as human beings will be more circumscribed than those of men. The anarchist-feminists made their most radical contribution by declaring that if gender distinctions ought not to inhibit women from participating in the economic and political life of society, neither were they valid in determining roles within our most intimate institutions."

Unfortunately by attempting to isolate this particular contribution and implying that it can be lifted bodily from the totality of the anarchist critique of society to be plugged module-like into a new feminist analysis Marsh robs the idea of much of its radical content. The "new feminist analysis" which Marsh seeks has been around for a long time and it's still called anarchist-feminism.

Lazarus Jones

### Processed World

55 Sutter Street, Suite 829, San Francisco CA, 94104. Quarterly, \$5.00/year.

Most of the lefties I've known over the years have done office work for a living. Despite all the rhetoric about the industrial proletariat, despite all the jabber about steel and auto, most of these folks end up behind a typewriter or a terminal.

That's not too surprising when you stop to think about it. Although I've written at some length about stupidities on the left, the fact is that lefties are usually fairly intelligent people. They can easily grasp that if one must live in class society, office work generally provides a less unpleasant existence than industrial labor. The characteristics of industrial labor are widely known: physical exhaustion, risk of violent disability and death, extremely unpleasant working conditions, constant quasi-military supervision, etc. The industrial working class is often the most militant section of the entire working class simply because they get the biggest pile of shit dumped on them.

In some circles, the "missionary" approach to the industrial working class is still considered feasible. You've probably run into them once or twice: people who get industrial jobs in order to spread the revolutionary gospel (usually according to Lenin) among the heathen savages. Many don't go that far: they get clerical jobs to support themselves but take their propaganda to some plant gate at six in the morning.

Until now, no one on the left has made an attempt to reach out to the office workers that we ourselves work with every day. Until now, we've mostly treated the people that we should have been closest to as if they were invisible, as if they were not "real workers" like auto workers or steel workers were the only "real workers."

Now, two women in San Francisco

have produced the first issue of a projected quarterly called *Processed World* in the hope that "it will serve as a contact point for office workers who are dissatisfied with their lot in life and are seeking something better."

Manuscript found in a typewriter, the first of the five articles in the new journal, attempts to outline the social reality of wage labor by looking at what most people ignore: what actually happens on the job. Examining the "trivia" of "daily routine", the author concludes: "In a grotesque, democratized parody of the master/slave dialectic, there is always somebody taking orders from somebody else."

In *New Information Technology: For What?*, the author explores the use of modern office technology against the interests of office workers and discusses the possibilities of computer technology in a classless society. NAA readers will not be surprised to learn that I particularly appreciated this piece.

To San Francisco, 1987—Would You Believe It?, I have to say no. But this elaborate fantasy of a municipal insurrection led by office workers was, in a small way, quite moving. If the people that you and I see every day at work were suddenly to rebel, their rebellion might very well look something like this piece. And it is difficult to argue against the idea that it is only when we can clearly see how it would be possible to rebel successfully that we can then make our rebellion a reality.

The new journal also includes articles on an office workers strike in San Francisco and on the shitty movie 9 to 5. The graphics and layout are quite professional.

I do have some criticisms of *Processed World*. The language in some of the articles, though clearer than that used in most left publications, is still dependent on traditional left terminology. We still have a long way to go to learn how to express libertarian ideas in the every-day language that people use.

Another element that seemed, for the most part, to be missing was the expression of rage that I feel and that many office workers I know feel about their jobs. Office workers really do have fantasies about killing their bosses.

And, of course, how could office workers begin to struggle? Do we go the traditional trade union route (assuming we can find one willing to take us)? Or can there be other, better possibilities?

The emergence of *Processed World* is a first step toward answering this question.

Frank Stevens

### LOVE & RAGE

Carl Harp, Pulp Press 1981, 73 p.p., \$3.95

*Love & Rage* is a powerful, provocative statement by a prison militant depicting the continuous struggle of prisoners against the most oppressive conditions anywhere in North America. Covering a time span of less than a year Carl Harp's personal accounts are absorbing leaving the reader with a deep-felt sense of horror. So much so that it is hard to imagine how even the most unsympathetic person could not be swayed by the brutality described.

The capacity of the diary entries to arouse indignation against the penal system is most acutely evident in the conveyance of the emotional highs and lows Carl Harp experiences from one day to the next. The highs often being stimulated by victories against

the system and the reign of terror by the guards and especially the peak moments of unity among the inmates. The lows arise from moments of defeat and feelings of empathy with those enduring the worst consequences of the system.

Through it all is Carl Harp's determination to never capitulate. There is an unmistakable impression left by his words that the continuous struggle he is engaged in has become his central motivation for continuing to live. What other interpretation is possible given statements such as, "I have been assaulted repeatedly in every manner possible on all levels of my being, even raped with riot sticks. I have died a thousand and one deaths, and I have seen everything

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On Wednesday, July twenty-nine, the Prince of Wales and Lady Diana will be married in Westminster Cathedral. On the same day, the wedding of Prince Edward and Sophie Rhys-Jones will be announced. For more information on the Enthronement of Prince Edward, contact the Whitechapel High Street, London.



# Love & Rage

imaginable, including death." To most if not all of us death itself would be a far better alternative.

*Love & Rage* was published to motivate people within the prison system and outside of it to give active support to the anti-prison movement. A statement as profound as this may succeed where other approaches have met with very limited success.

*Love & Rage* similarly adds to the mountain of evidence attesting to the dismal failure of the penal system as a response to the problem of anti-social behavior in human society. Thereby it posits the need for workable alternatives which are neither naive nor inhumane.

Brian Amesly

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Kurt Russell as 'Snake' Plissken leads parade of Macho leading men in movie summer silly season.

## OUTLAND

*Outland* starts out interestingly enough with a rank-n-file discussion among a couple of outer space miners on management's attempts to increase automation in violation of the contract and the inability of their shop steward to do anything about it. Unfortunately any illusions the viewer might have about this movie addressing the increasing automation of work are soon dissipated as *Outland* swiftly degenerates into a standard space opera. *Outland* is *High Noon* in space with Sean Connery reprising Gary Cooper's role as the only law west of Mars.

Connery plays a federal district marshal assigned to a mining operation on Io a moon of Jupiter. When the miners start doing odd things like pulling out their own oxygen tubes and walking out the wrong ends of air-locks in their underwear Connery's suspicions are aroused.

With the help of a "crusty" female medical technician he traces the source of this strange behaviour to an illegal amphetamine that some of the miners are using to make their labour easier and more bearable. The drug has the unfortunate side effect of burning out the brains of its users after nine months of use. Along the way Connery's wife walks out on him via a video Dear John letter and he finds that his second-in-command is part of the drug ring. The rot, of course, goes right to the top. soon Cooper/Connery is all alone awaiting the arrival of the bad guys on the noon stage/shuttle.

*Outland* is a disappointing movie because it could have been so much better. It has the same combination of grit, sweat and high-tech that made *Alien* such a refreshing contrast to the Squeaky-clean ambience of *Star Wars*. The set designs, especially the miner's living quarters, are brilliantly conceived offering enough photogenic diagonals and levels to keep even an Eisenstein happy.

Frances Sternhagen as the medical technician who become Connery's only friend and ally is given a meaty part which does not require her to be "decorative." Peter Boyle is suitably sleazy as the mine boss and Connery, as always, turns in an excellent performance.

But, its still Sean versus the universe with no hint of collective reaction to industrial capitalist oppression. The director makes one feeble bow in this direction when Connery at on point asks the miners — whose brains are being fried for profit by their employers — for help against the company goons. Their only response is to meekly mumble that "he's the law." By the time the final credits roll the goons have been killed, the mine boss punched out and the drug ring smashed. Sean's on the shuttle home with his wife and all's well with the world — er, moon that is.

## ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

*Escape from New York* is an incredibly silly movie whose only redeeming feature is that from now on the movie reviewers should find it much more difficult to use that old

standby: "Never have the mean streets of New York looked as mean and dirty as in....."

The plot of *Escape From New York*, if it can be called such, is that the year is 1997 and New York has been transformed into a giant maximum security prison. The president's airplane has been hijacked and crashlanded in New York, the mission — get him out alive in time to attend a major peace conference. The world's toughest man, Snake Plissken, is implanted with a time bomb and entrusted with the task, yawn, in exchange for a full pardon. The film unfolds with awesome predictability, the requisite number of plot complications and bodies are stacked up, leading ponderously and inevitably to Snake and the president's "escape from New York."

The points of interest in a turkey this bad are purely incidental to the movie itself. For example: our man Snake is an ex-war hero who picked up a purple heart in Siberia and was also involved in a commando strike on Leningrad. China and Russia, it seems, have finally gotten back together and are waging an inconclusive conventional war against America. Its nice to know that in the post-detente world of the B-Movie the enemy is no longer the euphemistic "other side" but Soviet Russia plain and simple.

The hijacker who puts the "plot" in motion is a member of the "National Liberation Front of America" and the turgid cut-and-paste rhetoric addressed to "the workers" is gratingly familiar. The distorted echo of Red Brigades/Red Army Faction "revolutionary" verbiage underlines the utter isolation of those who have taken the terrorist path.

Even the "comic relief" in *Escape From New York*, which if properly handled might have at least made the movie entertaining, is hackneyed and lifeless. From Ernest Borgnine as the last cabbie in New York to the excruciatingly inevitable "I Love New

York" graffiti on the city's crumbling walls all the lines and gags are absolutely predictable. Faced with such an inexorable flood of unoriginality why resist the inescapable comment? *Escape* this movie!

## RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

This film could do for archeology what *All The President's Men* did for journalism. If hordes of eager young students start flocking to sign up for Archeology 101 courses *Raiders of the Lost Ark* will be at least partially responsible.

Harrison Ford stars as Indiana Jones a rough, tough, "devil-may-care archeologist who is recruited by the U.S. secret service to prevent the lost Ark of the Covenant from falling into the evil hands of the Nazis. The film is excellently edited and zips dandily along from the opening scene to the closing credits with scarcely a pause for breath in between. In fact the film is so artfully put together that you're tempted to ignore the rather nasty undertone which runs throughout the film.

My father used to tell me that when he was a truck driver with the British Army in Malaya, just after the Second World War, there was an unofficial policy that instructed Army drivers, in the case of an accident involving a native, to back up and make sure that the victim was dead. A one-time only death benefit was much cheaper for the British administration than a survivor's pension. That sort of attitude permeates *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

In the movie the inhabitants of the countries through which Jones cuts such a broad swath are treated as being as inconsequential as stray chickens or inanimate objects. Jones runs over, shoots down (in self defense, of course) and generally manhandles "the natives" with a totally reckless abandon. The implicit racism of such an attitude mars what is an otherwise enjoyable piece of summer fluff.

## New And Recommended

### Louise Michel

Edith Thomas, Black Rose Books, 1980, 444 p.p., \$9.95

A biography of Louise Michel the French Anarchist and *petroleuse* best known for her role in the Paris Commune of 1871 written by a biographer well aware of the perils and pitfalls of hagiography.

### Main Currents Of Marxism

Leszek Kolakowski, Oxford University Press, 1981, 3 volumes, \$9.95 each

A paperback edition of Kolakowski's monumental critique of Marxism. From the roots of Marx's thought in early Christian philosophy to Stalinism and Maoism Kolakowski systematically dissects the Marxist body politic and takes as his conclusion that: "Marxism has been the greatest fantasy of our century."

### History of Work Cooperation In America

John Curl, Homeward Press, 1980, 64 p.p., \$3.75

An excellent short survey of cooperativism in America from the colonial era to the present. Available from: Homeward Press, P.O. Box 2307, Berkeley, CA 94702, USA.

### Campaign Against The Model West Germany

The Atomic State and the People Who have to Live in It 1981, 44 p.p., 20c

An improved reprint of the first English translation of this document on the nuclear aspect of the "Model" West Germany. Available from: Box 282, Station E, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2T 3A7. Please enclose 25c for postage and handling.

### Protest Without Illusions

Vernon Richards, Freedom Press, 1981, 168 p.p., £1.95

With the massive resurgence of anti-nuclear protest in Europe this book is very timely. It consists of reprints of articles published in *Freedom* magazine during the late '50s and early '60s on the CND marches and Committee of 100 Sit-Downs protesting nuclear weapons. As the author states: "at least some of the new generation of protestors may start from where the others left off rather than all over again from the beginning. The forces of repression learn from their experience."



# On Class and Culture Part Two: Domination and party politics

By B. Newbold

Domination could well be the end of us. It perverts justice into revenge. Domination makes the law of the jungle second nature and it encourages us to drink coffee. Its completely senseless.

When a part of society is enslaved in the service of others it appears as if producers are related only indirectly to each other as buyers and sellers. Here is the real beginning of rationality as the organizing principle of society as a whole. From then on labour of each and every kind is exploited and reduced to money-making.

And so work loses its specificity. Fit for anything, fit for nothing. The quality of life recedes into the background of a purely quantitative existence. One thing's supposed as good as another provided only that each is present in sufficient magnitude. Living by numbers. A night of the living dead.

To the extent that domination or money-making seizes control of production, the technique and social organization of the labour process are revolutionized and with them the prevailing forms of social consciousness.

We are dealing here with two spheres in politics. The world of labour on the one side and the arena of culture, with the state its acme, on the other. Today these spheres are connected politically in the voluntary associations called parties. Parties have become the practical organizations of the class relations of labour and determine the scope of the state.

The party is a specific social relationship. It is the concrete organ of class. This political form of labour relations is at once the expression of social labour, or work done for another, and the underlying reality of all idealistic superstructure including the state.

Rational society is about political parties. The latter are the modern form of classes and embrace the whole of commercial and industrial life as well as constituting their general forms in consciousness.

In *Struggle! (IS!)* is a Marxist-Leninist political party. An analysis of IS! will permit the formulation of a general historical law of politics. This will provide an index for understanding IS! and its impact on the class struggle in Canada.

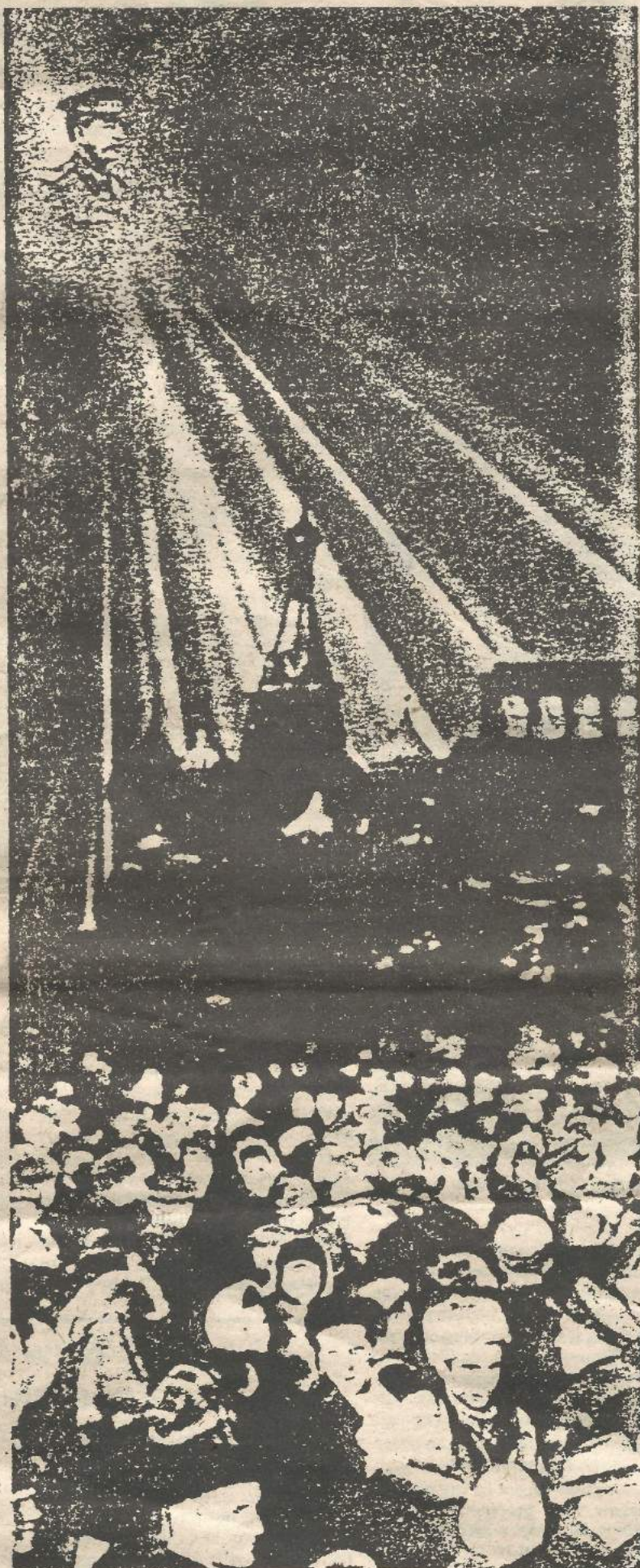
## Three Conditions

At least three related historical conditions are common to all parties in this century. They are the stability of industrial nations' voting patterns since at least 1945 in a period of political change, a party form frozen in the social structure of the 1920s and parties' construction of a regional patron-client relation to exchange patronage for support in political campaigns.

In sum parties are conditioned by the uneven or regional development inherent in modern industrial society. For example, the characteristic difference in outlook between industrial and commercial regions in Canada has encouraged national parties to entrench themselves in provincial alliances.

In the case of IS! this tendency to entrench an organization on the basis of provincial funding sources is indicated both by its top-down organizing approach in external work with different mass movements and its central committee's internal authority over the day-to-day tasks of the IS! membership.

Regional funding promotes this hierarchy and elite accommodation because it perpetuates regional in-



## Apotheosis of a Leader

At the time of Stalin's 70th birthday, a slide of him was projected onto a huge searchlight, which was in turn focussed on a low cloud over Red Square. The result was photographed for the cover of *Ogoniok* (Moscow), No. 52, December 1949.

terests and marshals the membership in accordance with them. As the economic basis of the party organization these interests decide a great deal of any party's policy. So a pertinent inquiry is who owns the given party? In other words how is a party financed? The formal side of this question is how does a party derive its support in modern industrial society? What is the party's effect on the current agencies of the state? This requires an explanation of political culture.

Therefore two of the key concerns of this investigation are the organization and financing of IS!. These are historical concerns. This consideration of history is necessary because so little is known about the empirical character of IS!. And if we can uncover that particular history it will allow us to understand the present socio-

historical relationship between social class and the police.

To-day the state is effected two ways by parties. State patronage can be either bureaucratic or charismatic. The former is rational while the latter is traditional. The central elements of this dual patron-client relationship are social inequality and exchange. The masses are bureaucratically reified into numbers to the advantage of an elite which carries on a personal relation between equals internally.

Patronage, in Canada, is embodied in the 'tory' cultural fragment which engenders elitism and a pronounced deference to authority. Historically the 'toryism' of Canada was associated with the defeat of free trade initiatives and the adoption of the MacDonald national policy. This policy had roots in the feudal traditions of

rank and privilege. Colonialist policies encouraged its development in the Canadas.

## Tory fragment

The tory cultural fragment is a particular form of social consciousness which has historically corresponded with the tendency to solve the problems of private enterprise by state means. That tendency was crystallized in the aftermath of the unsuccessful rebellion of 1837. A contemporary example would be the imposition of the War Measures Act in October, 1970. Another is the tory character of the Liberal Party's strategy which was able to co-opt much of the support for radical measures by instituting public control over welfare measures during the 1940's and by granting trade union rights to workers, under state supervision. These measures served at once as a basis for new capital accumulation

programmes, by buying labour peace, and they legitimated the state at the same time by the use of Keynesian fiscal policy.

The masses are given values bureaucratically while the corporate elite is subjected to a form of egalitarian patronage in the redistribution of public resources. That explains the contemporary protests by rank and file party workers in traditional parties against the civil service merit system. IS! can be understood in terms of this rank and file discontent with the inadequacies of bureaucratic patronage.

IS!'s major campaigns have been conducted against what they call the 'crisis measures'. A key tension of this organization experience has been the bureaucratization of clientage politics in Quebec. One employee of IS! recalled that he was first attracted to the organization during their intervention to prevent day-care cutbacks in Montreal in 1974. This was a very early campaign by IS!.

IS!'s leading bodies have no financial relation with corporate economic power. The cynical may well attribute this to the fact that IS! does not stand for election to parliament. And IS! does not control public resources. A central concern of this article will be to disclose the financial sources of IS! in detail. Here two remarks on the subject will suffice. One method of financing the organization is through newspaper sales and appeals through the paper for donations. This is displacing a more original method of financing. That method involved membership contributions. These include dues as well as extra funds at times for special projects.

IS! can be classified according to the organized relation between its parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities. This organizational continuity can be described by a specific characteristic of IS! It is a 'front'. This type of organization is incapable of, rather than unwilling to, engage in elections. The core activity of the group is therefore extra-parliamentary agitation and propaganda. The distance of IS! from electoral office and capital, in a context where political clientage and administrative bureaucracy have been the norm, enhances the party's extra-parliamentary apparatus. The implications of that party structure can be disclosed by studying the practical and theoretical precedents for this political group.

## Theory and practice

The theory and practice of the working class in Canada can be

examined by reference to their origin, internal division, the uneven development of town and country and nationalism. It was the newly arrived craftsmen from Britain, and later Europe, who practically founded the trade union movement in late nineteenth century Canada. The movement was also influenced by the emergence of the United States socialist current.

Socialism, broadly defined, is the theory of the working class under the conditions which prevail in modern industrial society. It is historically related to urbanization. Urbanization involves pitting manufacturing interests against agricultural interests. Urbanization means regional development.

One implication of this bourgeois development was the uneven proletarianization of mental and manual labour. The impact of this unevenness persists today in the distance which mental labourers maintain from the struggle of their class. The opposition of mental labourers to manual labourers is closely associated with a material interest and its defense. The theory of socialism has never overcome this opposition decisively. That is because socialism as a theory was not created by workers but by some of the foremost intellectuals of the nineteenth century.

This explains why socialist theory has not been a general expression of the real historical movement of the proletariat since at least the early twentieth century. It is the 'ideology of bourgeois intellectuals' introduced into the workers' movement 'from outside'. Leninism expresses this political practice.

The Leninist model of socialism is positivist and embodies naively realistic ideas. The historical relationship between this theory and the workers' practical movement has not been basically changed to this day. This theory is related to the practice of trade union organizing and hence the political struggle for democracy. This model had sources which were not rooted in Canada. It was an external model. The Leninist model defends a temporary, local necessity rather than criticizing its historical limits. This theory gained prominence in the workers' movement just as actual revolutionary struggles suffered setbacks. Historically this particular form of social consciousness is related to periods of industrial expansion and capitalistic stabilization.

The expansion of industrial capital in Quebec during the 1960's conditioned the growth of the proletariat at the same time as the agencies of the state in Quebec were modified. This was accomplished by the re-emergence of a mass nationalist or democratic movement in Quebec. This was the specific historical context in which IS! emerged. IS! has, therefore, an historical background similar to earlier Leninist parties and that is why it maintains a positivist theory, a democratic political outlook and an emphasis on trade union rights in its practical work.

However, you can't beat uneven development by fetishizing heavy industry and its work-force over and against so called small production as the sectoralist economic strategy of the 'front' type like IS! are wont to do. This only treats uneven development as an eternal part of the human condition.

Uneven development is an historical condition. It is the product of tory traditions. This is the tradition of using the police to protect the bourgeoisie's interest from



# El Salvador and Poland: Two paths to Revolution

*We must choose between two paths: the road of El Salvador, of a lethal sidetrack into capitalist politics which is actually a prelude to world war, or the road of Poland, of mass and autonomous confrontation against the capitalist state.*

For the past several months since the proclamation of the Left's "final offensive", we have witnessed a further scourge of capitalist brutality in El Salvador. Within the countryside the guerrillas are completely on the defensive, having been sacrificed for "reasons of (capitalist) state" as the modern-day La Passionaria, Ana Guadalupe Martinez, will argue. The F.D.R. now cynically admits that its meager military of-

fensive was nothing but a bargaining ploy against the Duarte Junta, with the corpses of Salvadorean youth used as their ante.

Always ready to mediate between bourgeois factions, the Catholic Church has moved away from its previous blanket support of the Left to the more familiar position of moderate governmental "reform, re: statified capitalism. And this stance is amiable with the

Stalinist F.M.L.N. & the Sandinistas as well.

The Reagan Administration wasted no time in putting its house in order in El Salvador. A large propaganda effort to document alleged "Soviet intervention" began in February; \$10 million in new military hardware was rushed in bringing the total current commitment to \$35 million. The equipment included helicopters, trucks, jeeps, surveillance gear, heavy machine-guns, M-16 rifles, & M-79 grenade launchers; 56 military trainers, among them green berets, have also been ordered in. With the incontrovertible logic of an MX missile, the right-wing portion of the U.S. imperialist ruling-class has convinced its brethren of the left, & their counterparts abroad, of the present dead-cold "correctness" (as Haig might utter it) of the over-kill formula.

Economic aid to the Duarte regime, desperately needed to finance the state-supervised collectivization of the big agricultural estates, has been upped to \$100 million. Government officials, temporarily outflanking the Left, are touring the countryside, led by the demagogue Morales Ehrlich, extolling this "land reform" program; for the rural proletariat, the State is the new patron. National elections have been promised in

'82. Meanwhile, in San Salvador the terror of the rightist death squads, abetted by the government, goes on and on.

Here in North America, the Leftist politicians have also been enjoying an ideological field day of their own. The liberals, Social Democrats & Stalinists, true to form, have revived the old Viet Nam popular-front-for-world-capitalism atmosphere. Under the tight, bureaucratic auspices of the "Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador" (C.I.S.P.E.S.), various "legal and peaceful" (what else?) marches and vigils have been staged. Liberal politicians are basking in the popular spectacle; Kennedy, odds-on-favorite for the "progressive" U.S. bourgeoisie in 1984, has introduced legislation to suspend military aid and recall the military advisers in El Salvador. Not one to miss a good show, the Church has gotten into the act, too.

The sole organizing platform of C.I.S.P.E.S. is "self-determination" by which they simply mean the Left to state power. Anyone who foolishly attempts to raise even a semblance of proletarian class positions ("But how dare you?") like the Trotskyists or the anarchists has been threatened and/or excluded from their mendicant activities. The repressive antics of the C.I.S.P.E.S. gang are merely a mild harbinger of what the F.D.R. would do with a fury to the Salvadorean proletariat if it ever obtained a monopoly of state violence.

Another facet of the liberal/left hysteria over El Salvador is the so-called "Argentina connection"—an ominous, rightist conspiracy to bolster the draconian regimes in Honduras and Guatemala by a massive infusion of military goods from South America. The specter of the Right, along with the hoopla about the paramilitary units of Nicaraguan and Cuban exiles in Florida, is part and parcel of a developing leftist campaign at anti-fascist mystification precisely at a time when the class struggle in North America against the Reagan austerity is about to commence. All of these leftist machinations are just so much ideological junk to be thrown away by the awakening proletariat.

We must all choose between these two paths: the road of El Salvador, of a lethal sidetrack onto capitalist politics, which is actually a prelude to world war, as was Spain in the late 30's; or the road of Poland, of mass and autonomous confrontation against the capitalist state. For the revolutionaries the choice is clear. The tasks at hand now are not to immerse oneself into any popular leftist sewer, but to diligently and confidently work for: 1. political and organizational regroupment on a global scale, and 2. interventions with a genuine revolutionary, international perspective in the real class battles going on here in North America & around the planet, all of which are surely about to intensify.

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# An Open Letter from the LWG: Why we left the ACF

The purpose of this open letter to the anarchist movement is to make known the Libertarian Workers' Group's (LWG) reasons for disaffiliating from the ACF. This decision has not been an easy one. The discussions around this decision have been long and hard. We took this step only after intense internal discussion spanning the course of several months.

Over the last year we've seen a disintegration of the internal and practical development of the ACF. Those LWGers who attended the Morgantown conference (July, 1980) left the conference with generally positive feelings. Since that time our feelings and commitment to the ACF have drastically changed. By the same token it must be said that the LWG has met its obligations to the ACF in those areas where we committed ourselves, notable writing articles and editing the NAA, External Correspondence Group matters, finances, collection of graphics and in attempting, along with the Syndicalist Alliance, to develop an ongoing fund and solidarity committee for our Chilean comrades, as well as other solidarity work and contributions to internal discussions and policy setting.

Before we go any further we should clearly spell out our future relationship to the ACF. In this regard we would like to maintain comradely ties. We view these ties in concrete terms. That is continued commitment to the NAA; to work on projects of mutual interest and concern and to discuss and debate in a free and open fashion issues of the day, theory, practice and the development of an active class struggle anarchist movement.

On the positive side it can be said that our generally active role in the ACF over the past 3 years has been a good learning experience. Yet it's unfortunate that the negative aspects of this relationship outweigh the positive ones.

Over the course of time the LWG has spent more and more of its meeting time to discuss the problems and the future of the ACF. As an affiliated group we clearly saw the need, and rightly so, to discuss all matters pertaining to the Federation. Yet ACF internal matters seemed to overtake the practical aspects of developing a coherent organization with a presentable analysis, solid mutual projects and practice. In this light, time that could've been used to develop our local work became somewhat wasted time discussing many non-practical matters. Matters that had no bearing on the future of an activist, class struggle and well co-ordinated anarcho-syndicalist and anarchist communist movement.

Rather than placing the blame on what has become a rather sectarian (internally and otherwise) and ineffective organization on any one group, we feel that we are all to blame to one degree or another. Thus we have observed that there has become little or no room for open and honest discussion. This has led, in part, to the lack of collective discussion on practical activity and theoretical matters. The manner in which comrades have discussed issues with each other has been less than comradely. In fact some of the discussions and articles in the Internal Discussion-Bulletin and the NAA have been downright dogmatic, ultra sectarian and personally offensive. Although many members of the LWG may not politically disagree with many of these opinions, we are, however, displeased with the style they are written in.

Furthermore the LWG feels that the orthodoxy of some groups is not

a positive example of other groups attempts to develop a "new anarchism." That is a theory and practice relevant to modern conditions. This only leads to a poor display of internal and public sectarianism, substitutionalism in areas where we should be playing key and militant roles in the struggles "from below"; abstentionalism from the class struggle, and an abstentionalism that has not been based in practice; and intolerance for opposing perspectives. And most of all, a lack of comradeship. While we agree that it's important to maintain a solid degree of continuity with basic anarchist principles and organizational forms, we find it hard to accept and work with groups who are so frozen in time and opinions and who are unwilling to synthesize ideas and forms of struggles that have not necessarily been thought of or practiced by anarchists.

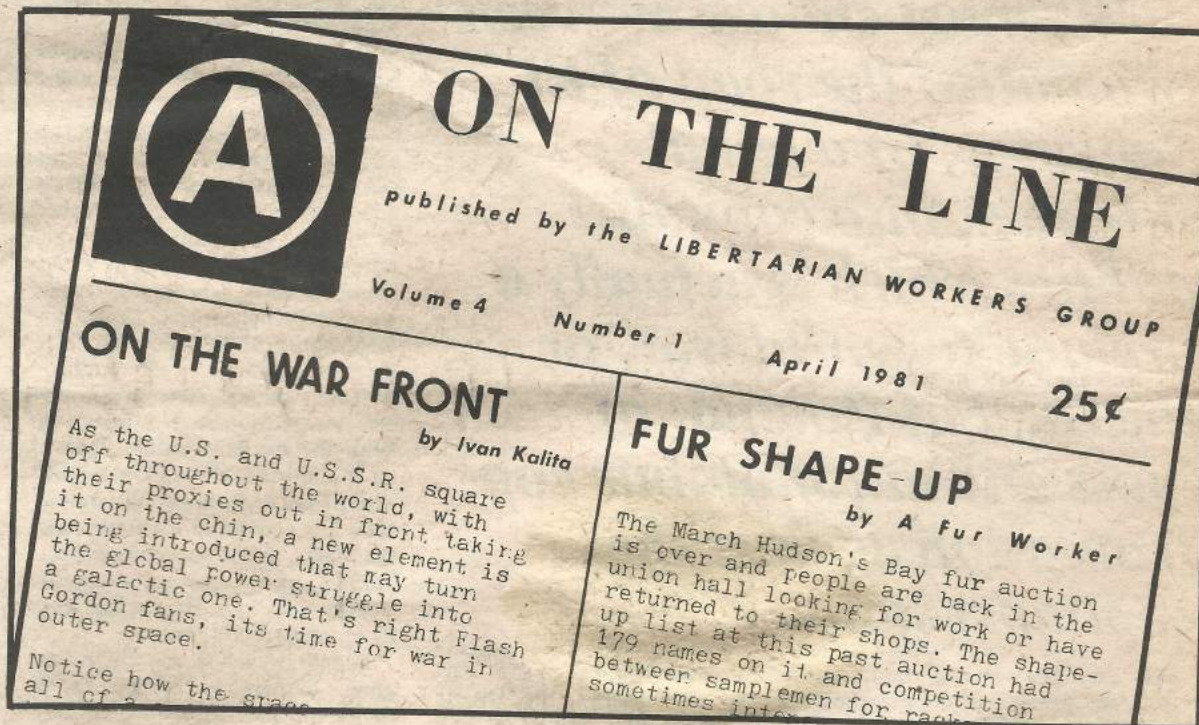
Part and parcel with this, the LWG can no longer accept that fact that comrades are frozen out in one way, shape or form because of a particular outlook on any one issue or issues. We refuse to accept a monolithic outlook or "line" and we oppose the tendency towards this. Thus we feel that by striking out on our own we will again have the room to act and develop our ideas, methods of struggle and organizational forms without being unjustly criticised.

Much to our displeasure we presently see the ACF as an ineffective organization. We've seen good intentions as well as potential dissipate without any signs that the present malaise will be overcome. Over the course of time we've seen the ACF become more of a diversion from local activity. There seems to be more concern with organizational structure than building the local base from which we can determine what forms and structures the federation should take on. That is not to say that we don't see the need for certain predetermined structures. However, rather than going to the root of the problems (theory and practice), the fetishization of "structure" has become paramount. It should be stressed that the LWG has always advocated the need to build the local base as a complement to building a continental federation. We must therefore be critical of those who accuse us of "localism." In the long run we see the need for a viable and cohesive anarcho-syndicalist and libertarian communist federation.

The potential of our activity in the New York area is great. It can be said without exaggerating that the LWG, small as it is, is in the best position we've ever been in to develop a solid base. Through the development of our independent positions and roles in our areas of activities we do stand a real chance of developing the type of influence and cohesiveness in the movements "from below" that has not been seen in the New York area in years.

Unlike other ACF affiliates the LWG has made an effort to prioritize our political and workplace activities. In this respect our group has been very active in three different areas of activity: the workplace, the anti-nuke and anti militarist struggles. In these three areas the LWG stands a good chance of promoting our ideas, in particular decentralized forms of organization, open debate and discussion, workplace and/or industry wide newsletters and in specific cases anarcho-syndicalist and libertarian communist political perspectives in an open and honest fashion.

As many may already be aware, the LWG has also made a conscious



effort to develop our ideals and the practical application of them through such activities as education and propaganda, notably through the Libertarian Book Club, leaflets, and our newsletter (*On The Line*), as well as the NAA. Over a course of time the LWG, and its predecessors, have emphasized solidarity work and has built upon this, through our support and activities in strikes, anarchist prisoner support, H-Block, support of underground activities of anarcho-syndicalists in Chile, Bolivia and unionists in the USSR, as well as numerous other solidarity efforts. Although several other ACF affiliates have been active in such solidarity efforts, the overall work of all affiliates on the local level has been nil. While the ACF's solidarity record has been pretty good, ongoing attempts to create local solidarity committees has been nothing short of poor. In particular the record on Chile and Bolivia.

Similarly the LWG has made attempts to develop ourselves politically through the medium of the generalized struggles of our class. In

some cases we've fared well, in others we've failed. However, unlike other affiliates we've taken up the very premise that the ACF was founded on: anarchist activism. Through the course of time we've seen little of this premise take hold outside of a few ACF affiliates. Even more so, we've seen less discussion in the IDB and at conferences about the nature of affiliates local activity and the implications of this activity for other affiliates. In part we're just as much to blame, yet we've, on several occasions, tried to move the discussions in this direction.

In short, the LWG has viewed our affiliation with the ACF as anything but productive in developing our local base. At times the general outlook and sentiment of the federation or tendencies within the ACF have worked against us. Truthfully, the LWG can not, or will not, accept "lines" that aren't tested through practice. And this has been much the case thus far.

We would like to conclude this letter by making it known that our decision to disaffiliate was an inde-

pendent one. There may be those who feel that we are working with others to wreck the ACF. On the contrary, we firmly believe that the ACF will stand or fall on its own merits.

The Libertarian Workers' Group looks forward to working with the ACF on many projects. The same holds true for other class struggle oriented anarchist organizations. We naturally invite comments on this letter and some of the ideas expressed therein. We hope that this could lead to an on-going dialogue with all those concerned with the issues of our class.

Libertarian Workers' Group



## Brenda

Continued from Pg. 3

Branch on this and other anti-francoist activities throughout Europe and these interviews and depositions have been recorded and are a matter of record. The only reference to the name Earl was made on 5 October 1970 by Detective Inspector David Palmer Hall at an interview with both Brenda and Stuart in the presence of his Solicitor. Palmer-Hall asked Stuart if he used the name Earl when booking journeys abroad, to which he replied he did not. Brenda was not asked the question, which is rather surprising as she has always been known by her maiden name, Brenda Anne Earl—nor was she questioned about any visit to Germany. A year and a half later, Stuart Christie was arrested by Scotland Yard and charged with "Conspiracy to cause explosions". This case was to become known as THE ANGRY BRIGADE TRIAL and was one of the longest and most exhaustive trials in British judicial history. Included in the conspiracy charge was the incident at Heathrow Airport on May 10, 1970, and the related incidents throughout Europe on the same day. Brenda was not charged at any time, nor did any evidence emerge during the course of the trial to link her with any of the defendants or the activities of the Angry Brigade and the FIJL other than the fact of her relationship with Stuart

Christie, an anarchist and known anti-Francoist. The only evidence against Stuart Christie to involve him in the Angry Brigade trial was the fact he was friendly with one of the defendants and that the police claimed to have found two detonators lying loose in the boot of his car. That this evidence was planted by Scotland Yard officers at the time was accepted unanimously by the jury who heard the case and they rejected all the charges against Stuart as being deliberately and maliciously contrived by Scotland Yard because of his anarchist politics and his earlier involvement in an attempt on the life of General Franco in 1964 aged 17, and his continued commitment to the anti-fascist and anti-Francoist movement. To date we are not aware of any similar attempt at a frame-up against Brenda by the German police, and we are certain that if any such evidence existed it would have been adduced at the time of Brenda's arrest and interrogation in late May 1970, or during the 18 month long Angry Brigade investigation, or the subject of an extradition hearing any time over the past 11 years, but the desperate lengths to which the British police went to frame Stuart Christie in 1971 and the subsequent harassment of both Brenda and Stuart which forced them to move to a remote island in Orkney should be kept well in mind.

WE BELIEVE that the reason for the arrest of Brenda Earl in Han-

nover on 19 May was due a) to the fact that her name had never been removed from the Central Police Computer as a likely suspect in the anti-Francoist incendiary campaign, and/or b) The embarrassment of the German security services following the recent disclosures that the Grey Wolves and other fascist paramilitary terrorist groups are operating openly and freely in Germany and moving at will across national frontiers, apparently with the collusion of certain sections of the security services. Forced to act against 'enemies of the state' they moved against anti-fascists and socialists such as Brenda, a suitable candidate who turned up at just the right moment fulfilling all the requirements of the authoritarian prejudices of the German police and judicial system. The spirit of nazism and Francoism still lurks beneath the facade of German democracy as Brenda's arrest on an 11 year-old warrant indicates. It is now up to the international labour and anti-fascist movement to make it clear to the German authorities that Brenda's arrest is, being seen throughout the world as an act of provocation reflecting the political prejudices of the German State and is an effective continuation of Francoist repression six years after the Dictator's death.





# Romania: Another crack in the Soviet block?

By Brian Amesly

During the massive strike wave in Poland this past summer reports filtered through to some of the Western Press about the occurrence of scattered strikes in Romania. These strikes were a clear indicator of why Romania can be viewed as the East European state most susceptible to the Polish "contagion."

The one thing which is most commonly noted as distinguishing Romania from the rest of the Soviet block is its relatively independent foreign policy. Romania first broke ranks with the USSR in the early 1960's by taking a neutral stance in the Sino-Soviet conflict. This amounted to a rejection of the Soviet claim to be the leader of the international communist movement. A few years later Romania angered the USSR by not supporting the invasion of Czechoslovakia and more recently it did not give its approval to the military occupation of Afghanistan.

But realizing there are limits to how much deviation the USSR will tolerate the Romanian government has counter-balanced its foreign policy by close adherence to the Soviet system internally. The reasons for this can, in large part, be seen from the evolution of the regime.

## CP Weak

The ruling Communist Party completely owes its hold over state power to the USSR. As a political force in the mid-1940's it was insignificant. So much so that its total membership in 1944 did not exceed one thousand. Small though the Communist Party was the Soviet Red Army assured it of a major role in the post-war coalition government. It then skillfully used this position to gain complete control. Once this was accomplished the Communist Party's 'revolution' involving extensive industrial nationalization, agricultural collectivization and Stalinist terror was carried out.

Since the regime's power was not built upon popular support it has tried to compensate for this by appealing to Romanian nationalism. This largely explains the motivation for its 'independent' foreign policy. Nationalism is also closely inter-related to the use of Stalinist personality cults. Consequently, Romania's current leader Nicolai Ceaucescu has a cult around him which portrays him as 'the most beloved son of the fatherland'.

## Rapid Industrialization

These characteristics of the regime reflect its basic conservatism and similarity to the USSR. Likewise, there is great stress on rapid industrialization of the economy through the development of heavy industry. Consumer goods production has been a secondary consideration. As a result the real income of the Romanian workers and peasants has increased little throughout the life of the regime.

An important consequence of the industrialization drive has been the marked change in the country's



The spectre of invasion: Hungary 1956, a rebel stands in front of a line of dead Soviet soldiers.

class composition. At the time of the Communist 'revolution' the majority of Romanians were peasants while the workers were comparatively few in number. They now constitute the majority. Even so over a third of the population is still peasant.

While it grew the Romanian working class was not a bastion of militance. Nonetheless, the scattered strikes of last summer have had important precedents revealing its increasing social power.

During the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 worker unrest briefly manifested itself on a small scale. This coincided with student disturbances and sympathy for the revolution next door on the part of intellectuals from Romania's oppressed Hungarian minority which endures a considerable burden of discrimination. The combined effects sent shock waves throughout the regime. It responded with economic concessions and short-lived reforms in order to defuse the situation.

Logically, the Romanian government fully endorsed the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution as did all of the then allies of the USSR. This revealed an important limitation on the extent to which it will deviate from Soviet policy. For when the stability of the Romanian state is called into question Romania ceases to be very 'independent.'

## Miners' Strike

The most powerful workers' revolt to date occurred in August 1977. Some 35,000 Jui Valley coal miners staged a massive strike which shook Ceaucescu's regime. The action was provoked by a new pension law which the miners saw as an attack on their standard of living. During the strike demands that it be revoked were soon complemented by many others. These included the implementation of a six hour work day, the abolition of unpaid compulsory overtime, better working conditions and action to relieve food shortages.

When the government's Labour Minister and another official arrived on the scene they ended up being held captive in a mining pit. The workers thus forced Ceaucescu to intervene personally which interrupted a vacation at his private resort. When he arrived he faced a mass assembly of striking miners for five hours. All the while voices in the crowd heaped scorn upon him.

Ceaucescu defused the situation by promising economic concessions and a guarantee of no reprisals for the strike. But along with the carrot he also raised the stick raising the possibility of Soviet intervention.

The promises made by Ceaucescu

See Romania Pg. 14



# Prison News

## Pontiac Victory

On Saturday, May 9th, a jury of seven Blacks and five whites acquitted all ten Pontiac Brothers on trial for murder of three white guards during a prison uprising on July 22, 1978. After a trial lasting more than two months the jury took less than five hours to reach "not guilty" verdicts on all 57 charges before them.

The acquittals were all the more significant given the usual irregularities in such cases. The judge denied 400 defence pre-trial motions; the Judge selected jurors who had no qualms about the death penalty; the state paid former Pontiac inmates cash sums to testify, one witness received almost \$10,000. Other ex-prisoner witnesses were threatened with prosecution themselves if they didn't give the desired testimony. Many of the "eyewitness" accounts differed not only as to the identity of the prisoners involved but as to the sequence of events and the places where the various attacks were supposed to have taken place. One example of the implausibility of the State's case as a whole is that at least six prisoners were identified as having stabbed Lt. Thomas, one of the dead guards — but Thomas only received three stab wounds.

The state developed a conspiracy theory to explain the uprisings and the subsequent killings. Supposedly, after several months of gang conflicts, these gangs decided to bury the hatchet and to go in and kill the guards and "roll on the administration" at a meeting in the middle of the yard with hundreds of witnesses around.

To make this story wash, special prosecutor Algis Baulinas told the jurors over and over that they had to understand "their mentality," that "I know it's hard for some of you to put yourself in 'that mentality', they're no different from one another." In short, Baulinas' appeal was dripping with racism — all the defendants were Black — with the claim that "those guys" are different, less human, all the same, vicious, etc. This is the traditional method of getting convictions when the evidence isn't there. In this case, Baulinas told the jury that they had to "use your imagination" and that "some of the most telling testimony also comes from inferences."

Fortunately, the jury was not convinced.

## Pay Lower

That well known "reform" minded institution, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) has come up with a real winner this time. They recently announced a pay rise for prisoners which will essentially result in more work for fewer goods. Figures provided by Statistics Canada show that "the average single wage earner spends about 85% of his or her income on shelter, food, medical needs, taxes, furnishings, education and transportation. The remaining 15% is considered disposable income." Hence the daily disposable income for someone receiving the federal minimum wage — computed for six hours of work per day — would be \$3.15. With "taxes" taken off — compulsory savings and welfare and recreation fund — a prisoner will end up with \$9.95 per week whereas before the increase, the same person working in a shop could earn his bonus slightly over fifteen dollars per week. Significantly prices have gone up for canteen supplies, a carton of cigarettes will now cost \$9.50 as compared to 4.50 before.

Prisoners unable to work due to being in the Special Handling Units or administrative segregation will receive a maximum of \$6.00 per week which is no increase at all but they are facing the same escalated prices. And pay for prisoners in psychiatric units will be paid according to criteria such as "attitude, performance, cooperation, attendance and conduct."

A prisoner will no longer be able to receive any money from friends or relatives. Such money will be placed in a savings account in a black humour attempt to increase a prisoner's nest egg for the day she or he hits the street to help them avoid re-incarceration. Similarly any money that a prisoner brings into prison will be impounded until the day of release. These measures effectively preclude prisoners from using their own money or that of friends or relatives to purchase sports equipment, hobby craft material, or even shampoo, stamps, etc.

Already one of the two prison uprisings in British Columbia in early June was tied to the "pay raise" dispute. Three hundred prisoner at the medium security Matsqui institution destroyed about fifty per cent of the prison, including a part of the administration building, a cafeteria, an auditorium, a storeroom, most of the four wings of the residential complex, the prison chapel, and a number of huts on the recreational grounds.

At least 100 troops were brought in from the Canadian Forces Base at nearby Chilliwack as well as riot police and other reinforcements from nearby detachments. In an obvious psychological ploy, the riot police marched on the prison beating their batons against their shields. Control of the prison was surrendered the next morning when an ultimatum giving the prisoners fifteen minutes to decide what they were going to do was read over the loudspeakers. Already in the wake of this riot and a minor disturbance at Kent the CSC has announced the programmes will be reduced across the country because people think the prisoners have it too easy. The CSC fears a long hot summer ahead.

## People's Run

The People's Run for Leonard Peltier - Free the People - Free the Land will cover a total distance of 710 miles over much of New York State. It will begin at Buffalo, N.Y. and end ten to twelve days later in See Prison News Pg. 15



# More Letters More Letters More

Continued from Pg. 2

blather about "solidarity" with the "working class" and all the nit-picking criticism of other anarchists and socialists if a few lousy anarchist rags can't even scrape up the money to go on publishing? (Here's 50 bourgeois bucks where my mouth is.) Where's the news about people actually *doing* things, organizing and working to change things—could it be that it just isn't happening? Where are all these putative social revolutionaries? Is it all just a game? Why is it that the only positive notes in anarchist papers are the rehashed Good Old Tales of Kronstadt and Makhno and Barcelona? I propose that any movement that has to look back on a "golden age" for inspiration is a dead movement. For god's sake, that's what people are saying about the Christians! If we can't leave behind the ghosts and "saints" of classical anarchism, we're no better than Jerry Fallwell.

American Marxists and social democrats are starting to get the idea of anti-dogmatism, anti-sectarianism, movement-building, after the dark night of the '70s. They're tabling differences, joining forces, realizing that ultra-left rhetoric sounds like Japanese to American workers, and are actually trying to *do* something. What about us? Can we swallow our anti-hierarchical purity, our individualist egotism, our radicaler-than-thou pride enough to join them in a *real* movement that could realistically make a difference in our society? Can we give up mythology and mysticism for real politics and real people? Can we learn to communicate instead of pontificate? What are we actually willing to *do* for other people?

I'm not in the least suggesting that we give up our ideals, our fundamental purpose. But when those become sacred principles, shibboleths the mention of which inspire us to genuflect, anarchism is dead. It's become a religion, or a Shriner-style grownup little boys' club. The only way professed anarchists can have any influence is to put their asses on the line, search out common ground with other progressives and radicals, give up their childish infatuation with the symbols and rhetoric and history of dead anarchists, and actually involve themselves in the day to day, unglamorous, ungroovy, tedious *work* of bringing people together around common political concerns.

That doesn't mean ceasing our specifically anarchist activity either—quite the opposite. We should do our damndest to advance our ideas in the organizations and coalitions we participate in, though not necessarily under the banner of anarchism—that's just showy, like going to a costume party (I'm an anarchist, who are you? Oh, that's fun.). We also have to support anarchist papers and publishing houses (get those contributions in, you flaky hypocrites!), and work to establish visible anarchist groups and centers wherever we can. We have to organize, and that means giving up the prima donna act. All the juvenile romanticizing of "armed struggle" and all the pie-in-the-sky bullshit theory are absolutely meaningless if we can't even do that. Who the hell do we think we're kidding? Who the hell can take us seriously? We're not a movement, we're a joke.

Love and Rage  
Chris Nielsen,  
Honolulu, Hawaii

## Wear Green

Dear STRIKE!  
Amerikkka's oppression of people of color continues. Although the capitalist press covers

the genocide in Atlanta it is afraid to tell the truth that since the election of the puppet-actor-president RAYGUNS, and combined with the acquittal of murders in Greensboro, it is open season on blacks, gays and progressive people.

I urge the readers of STRIKE! to express solidarity with the people of Atlanta by wearing green ribbons showing that we will be victorious in the battle against racism.

In Struggle,  
Molvoane

## Direct Action

DEAR COMRADE EDITOR:

I was very encouraged to find that mine was not the only voice in the wilderness in telling women, especially those who say they are anarchists, not to participate in any demonstrations which lead to City Hall or any other government symbols where politicians mount the platform and exploit the wonderful show of solidarity and noble feeling for their own nefarious purposes. This going to the government begging for funds, only tightens the noose around our necks. Besides, what the government giveth it taketh away.

As in the old days, if we must demonstrate against injustice—let us go directly to the people, let us speak on street corners. Let us organize our meetings, forums. Let us open bookshops and support and publish papers, books and magazines, and self-help organizations of every kind. We must not be confused. We shall not be exploited by politicians and do-gooders who mean first their own personal good above everything else.

Best Wishes  
Esther Dolgoff  
New York, New York

## Tolerance

Dear STRIKE!

Frank Everett's letter in the last issue of NAA prompts me to ask if that individual believes there is a better world, a better reality, worth fighting for at all? In fact does he believe in reality at all? Does tolerance for a variety of opinions mean, for instance, we should publish articles in praise of nuclear power? If someone can come up with a legitimate use for this technology I'd love to hear about it. But this is unlikely to happen because there are no good arguments in favour of nukes (except, maybe, as power plants for space ships...not exactly your average basic necessity.)

What does it take to convince people that liberalism is *not* the same animal as objectivity and/or genuine tolerance? I mean, comrades and friends, *the proposition that all ideas are of equal value, morally, scientifically, or what have you, is itself an idea*, which is therefore open to criticism. During the recent convention of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one particular speaker, as part of a debate over the supposed merits of parapsychology, made the observation that "We can be so open-minded that our brains fall out." "Now an idea is either *right* or *wrong*, it can't be both. Likewise two opposing beliefs can be *both* wrong at the same time, but they can not be both *right* at once. As a corollary, those people who make such an ostentatious display of their "tolerance" for this or that idea, *regardless of whether those ideas are defended by anything remotely connected with rational thought*, are usually very, very intolerant of one particular idea or its proponents: that various opinions are not of equal value. Once again, we are not publishing pro-nuke, or anti-gay,

etc. ideas *not* because we are "uncool"; we do not publish them because they are **WRONG**. Period. And by "us" I refer to most movement papers in general. Genuine tolerance implies that individuals finding themselves at loggerheads because of their views, are *morally* obliged to make the best possible defense for what they believe is true. In the recent issue of **Open Road**, the Wyckoff article brought a great deal of criticism from some members of the **OR** collective. The criticisms they gave, to put it mildly, hit the nail right on the head. Yet the article was still printed. Why? I'm glad to see that

**OR** saw fit to publish this criticism, but the whole thing still seems like a waste of (expensive) space. And, once more, "we" don't publish, either in **NAA**, **Open Road**, **Fifth Estate**, etc., etc., a defense of nukes, etc., etc.,.....

Kind of a local example now ... Frank brings up the issue of armed struggle versus pacifism. Now both myself and all the comrades in Saskatchewan, Canada, with no exceptions that I know of, do not believe in either of these "alternatives", any more than we (or most of this paper's readers I dare say)

believe that marxism is an "alternative" to western managerial societies. Part of *being an anarchist in the first place*, is that we have not fallen for such phoney opposites. Yet it seems, at times, some comrades are trying to bring this problem back into the movement under a different guise. It hard to say if this is always intentional, or just the result of bad habits, but I hope that comrades everywhere will try to be on their guard against this.

Yours in solidarity  
"Tonto"  
Regina, Canada

## Romania

Continued from Pg. 13

proved worthless as heavy repression ensued including the use of troops which clashed with the miners. Prominent strikers were arrested while others were beaten and some 4000 fired. In addition, a full six months after the strike ended soldiers were still stationed around the mines.

The miners' strike set the context for the most effective attempt to form an autonomous trade union in the Soviet block excluding Poland. The Free Trade Union of the Working People of Romania (SLOMR) was declared in early 1979. News of this came to the West at a Paris press conference called by Romania's best known oppositionist the exiled literary figure Paul Goma.

The SLOMR's base of support consisted largely of workers belonging to the Hungarian minority and others who were involved in an attempt to form an underground union shortly before. What is remarkable is that when it announced its existence it had the declared support of almost 2500 workers including some of the coal miners who had struck. The union received some support from intellectual oppositionists as well.

Its orientation was modest stressing the defense of basic human rights and opposition to the glaring social inequalities stemming from the privileges of the bureaucracy. The SLOMR formulated a 24 point program highlighting demands for workers to be able to form their own trade unions and for freedom of mobility from one workplace to another. Implicit in these demands was the recognition that the official trade unions are obedient tools of the bureaucracy. Even so, the SLOMR had no intention of posing as a mass alternative to them.

## New Union Crushed

As could be expected the state responded swiftly with repression. It launched a propaganda smear campaign and the security police systematically harassed the union's supporters. Certain individuals were targeted for the worst repression. Vasile Parashiv who had become well known for his advocacy of autonomous trade unions became the victim of Soviet-style psychiatric repression. Another victim was SLOMR member Dr. George Cana who 'disappeared' in March, 1979 after persistent security police harassment.

These developments reveal how the strikes of last summer are part of a continuity of worker resistance. Therefore the question is posed as to whether the Romanian workers will catch the Polish 'disease' which has created the most dangerous crisis in the Soviet Block since 1956.

The evidence would seem to indicate that the prospect of this occurring is considerable provided the Polish workers are not quickly and effectively crushed by Soviet tanks.

Certainly the Romanian workers have at least some awareness of the Polish events. Indeed the 1980 strikes bear this out. More encouraging still is fact of their having shown the courage to strike despite the great risks involved.

The regime's conservatism and weak base of popular support further enhance the possibilities for revolt. This aspect implies the limited ability of the regime to adapt to new challenges. It is further demonstrated by Ceausescu's acknowledged reliance on the threat of Soviet intervention to maintain order.



Smilin' Nicolai Ceausescu had to cut his holiday short to head off a worker revolt.

## Challenge

Continued from Pg. 5

disguise their gangsterism and insane, unfocused rage.

## GOODBYE TO ALL THAT

We've said enough. We fully expect many people will say, as leftist romantics are so wont to, "objectively racist, classist, sexist, anti-prisoner", "inaccurate, slanderous, counter-revolutionary", "police provocation", blah, blah, blah. And no doubt they'll go on giving their innocent and naive support to whichever prisoner talks fastest and loudest with the most rhetorical political bullshit.

For us, though, we're tired of it. There are few enough opportunities in this society to begin building a healthy alternative, to struggle for a world that is more able to satisfy real human desires and needs. We are not interested in spending our energy nurturing and rescuing hoodlums only to have them turn on us. If even one person who reads this article begins to examine why he or she is active in the prison movement, and honestly questions how this is "revolutionary", and perhaps finds some constructive and joyous activity which offers the possibility of creating something positive toward a revolutionary future, this article will have served its purpose. The prison movement is a dead

But there are differences with the Polish situation which lessen the prospects of a workers' revolt. Poland from 1976 until 1980 had a flourishing opposition movement involving people from a wide social and political spectrum. Romania today has not.

Neither are there the embryonic workers organizations which persisted throughout the last decade in Poland following the 1970-71 insurrection. There is also an absence of any underground workers' publications whereas in Poland **Robotnik** existed to provide workers from different parts of the country a means to exchange information about each others problems and struggles.

Consequently, should strikes break out again in Romania the likelihood of their going down to defeat in isolation is higher. Only if strike actions are powerful from the start will there be any real chance of their spreading.

Still another obstacle is the division created in the working class by the oppression of national minority groups like the Hungarians. Any successful workers' movement of resistance will have to champion their rights thereby making real class unity possible.

But despite the obstacles the prospects for worker unrest inspired by the Polish example seem to be much better than anywhere else in Eastern Europe. If the Romanian working class starts to move soon the entire region could be up for grabs.

end. We don't deny prisoners the right to any support they can get, but that is not a solution to the problems of this society and the revolution that is necessary to solve them.

It is time for those of us on the outside to look at the society in which we live and work. Indeed, if we *do* have an obligation to prisoners, it is to stop playing servant or wife to them, and instead seek revolutionary changes in the outside world that can bring the prison walls down once and for all, and thereby prevent yet another generation of these cripples, the broken refuse of this sick society. All else is reformism, the abandonment of our own dreams in favor of the twisted and tormented nightmares of the imprisoned.

We must seek our solutions elsewhere.







## Libertarian Notes

### The Spook Has Landed

Do you believe in coincidence? Do you really believe that a U.S. government "communications officer" just happens by chance to be assigned to the world hot-spots at the most critical moments? Do you think it's just happenstance that he's coming to Vancouver right after the CIA's man here had his cover blown?

Well, meet Charles Jones, a 40-year-old Detroit native, and the newest member of the U.S. consul-general's staff in Vancouver, B.C.

Jones, who starts his new job in July, was the only black American to be held hostage in Iran for the entire 444 days, having arrived in Teheran just two months before the Iranians stormed the U.S. embassy. The U.S. has admitted that four of the hostages were CIA agents brought in at the last minute to try to destabilize the regime, but only three of the agents have ever been identified publicly.

What better candidate for The Fourth Man than Jones? His previous assignments include being one of the last U.S. employees to depart Saigon in 1975, and before that he arrived in Cairo in 1967, just in time for the Arab-Israeli Six Day War. He comes to Vancouver shortly after consular official Tom Marquis was unmasked as a CIA agent when his home at 4737 Cambie was spraypainted with slogans like "CIA Out of Canada." Marquis has already admitted working as a "psychological warfare" advisor in Vietnam.

The coincidences are mounting up. Why not call the U.S. consulate (685-4311) and ask Marquis or consul-general Robert Moore why we are being honoured with the CIA presence. And to stay current on CIA shenanigans around the world, check out *Counterspy* magazine (\$10 per year from box 647, Ben Franklin Station, Washington, DC 20044). The

current May-July issue has a takeout on RCMP-CIA links. (From *BC BLACKOUT*, Number 37).

### They're Gonna Put Him In The Movies

Lech Walesa could soon be coming to a theatre near you thanks to a recently released Polish movie entitled *Man of Iron* which won the top prize at this year's Cannes film festival. The film, directed by Andrzej Wajda, is a re-enactment of the Gdansk shipyard strike which led to the formation of Solidarity. It "stars" Walesa, playing himself, and 500 of the workers who were present at the signing of the Gdansk accords.

The awarding of the top prize to *Man of Iron* drew a predictable response from the Soviet gerontocracy which declared through its mouthpiece *Izvestia* that "It is now possible to maintain with certainty that the decision of the (festival) jury was purely a political action." It also came as no surprise that *Izvestia* labelled the film "anti-socialist."

*Man of Iron* is a sequel to a previous film by Wajda called *Man of Marble* which dealt with the 1970 workers uprising in Poland. A print of this film, with English sub-titles, will soon be released for distribution in North America. It is to be hoped that we won't have to wait quite as long for an English print of *Man of Iron*.

### Trouble In Paradise?

The vision of Japan as a land of benevolent managers and contented workers was dealt a sharp blow recently when three Japanese autoworkers attempted to organize around their oppression. The three workers, employees of the giant

Nissan automotive company, tried to pass out a leaflet at Nissan's truck manufacturing plant in Kawaguchi north of Tokyo demanding better pay, better working conditions and an end to the cosy relationship between union leaders and management. For their trouble the three men were repeatedly harassed and beaten by company and union goons.

As Masao Kayama, one of the protesting workers declared: Without oppression Nissan would not succeed. Because of low wages, there is no freedom to speak out against the system. Jobs are very hard but you cannot protest." An integral part of this repressive atmosphere are Japan's unions which are docile when facing management but vicious when dealing with workers who step out of line. Yoshiji Azuma, a machine tool worker, described how union officials reacted to his attempt to leaflet workers as they came off-shift. "Union leaders surrounded me and said repeatedly that one who disagreed with the union should get out." Later the threats became more physical as Azuma described how one day "about 20 men pushed me and kicked me. They came after me on my way home, grabbed my arms, pushed me and refused to let me go. (They) told me to sign my resignation. When I refused they beat me on the head."

The three dissident workers claim that many of their fellow workers are equally dissatisfied but are afraid to speak out for fear of reprisals. Certainly the treatment meted out to the three tends to support that view as management and union moved quickly to stamp out any manifestation of resistance. Finally the three workers filed a complaint charging 24 Nissan managers and union members with harassment and assault. The charges are currently under investigation.

### Free To Choose

The current issue of *Canadian Dimension*, an independent Marxist journal, has an article on the situation in China written by a disillusioned Maoist. After a little weeping and wailing over the lost idealism of the Cultural Revolution the author relates an interesting anecdote. It seems that between Sept. 22 and Oct. 12 of 1980 Milton Friedman visited China at the request of the Chinese authorities and presented four lectures to the Chinese Academy of Science and a select audience of party leaders. As the author states, "He delivered the message they wanted to hear: Incentives are essential. Moral exhortations to increase production are futile. So is any system based on equality. Greed is human nature." What we can't understand is why they had to drag Uncle Miltie away from more pressing tasks like advising the Chilean junta and Maggie Thatcher. They could have gotten exactly the same message from a re-reading of Lenin's *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* (*Izvestia*, April 28, 1918).

## Freedom infects China

By: Brian Amesley

Freedom has a way of being catchy as current developments in the People's Republic of China are demonstrating. It was just a couple of years ago that the world witnessed the spectacle of the ill-fated

Democracy Wall. Now in 1981 there are more indications that the struggle for freedom is heating up.

The character of the struggle has changed somewhat. Along with continued protests against the denial of basic rights of free ex-

pression there are movements afoot trying to institute trade-union organizations beyond the control of the ruling Chinese Communist Party bureaucracy. These have appeared in Wuhan and Shanghai. Inevitably one must wonder how long it will be before a rash of strikes follow?

The fact is that strikes could break out at any time. And if they do it will not be possible to explain them away by citing the "revisionism" of the post-Mao leadership.

As recently as the mid-1970's major strikes were waged in opposition to the Maoist state which was and still is the dominant employer. For example, in late 1974 a rail strike shut down services in central and southwestern China. The government responded with strikebreaking by using troops to unload the trains since the workers would not. In another case, in 1975, strikes were so extensive in the capital city of Che-kiang province, Hangchow, that 10,000 soldiers were needed to perform the jobs of the rebellious workers.

These outbursts occurred because the so-called proletarian dictatorship has never been very proletarian. Once this is realized it is not hard to see why the bureaucrats who exercise a monopoly control over the political and economic life of the Chinese people are showing a lot of interest in the events in Poland.



### Invasion Quiz

**Question:** If Germany and Russia both invade Poland which army will the Poles fight first?

**Answer:** The Germans. Business before pleasure.

**Question:** What is the source of the irony each time a Soviet official lays a wreath at the tomb of Poland's unknown soldier?

**Answer:** The soldier buried there was killed in the 1920 Polish invasion of Bolshevik Russia.

**Question:** How do the Czechs describe Poland's coat of arms? (Hint: 'Kania' is Czech for 'eagle'.)

**Answer:** An eagle between two vultures.

### Prison news

Continued from Pg. 13

New York City. Along the way there will be a series of activities consisting of traditional ceremonies conducted by the Elders of the Six Nations, as well as speaking engagements, cultural activities, and demonstrations.

Although the main focus of the Run will be Leonard Peltier and all Political Prisoners, the Run is also dedicated to the indigenous people of El Salvador and Guatemala and the children who have been killed in Atlanta. In Buffalo there will be a demonstration against the corporate state which breeds both the degenerate fascist elements which have increasingly been attacking the Black communities across the country and the cancerous tumours of Love Canal and West Valley. Demonstration/ceremonies will be held at various prisons along the route including Attica, Auburn State Prison and Dannemora.



In order to be a success the Run needs support in the form of runners, money, food, publicity, participants at the various happenings, logistical support etc. No specific date has yet been set. But for more information write to: **The Peoples Run c/o Leonard Peltier Support Group**, P.O.B. 176, Mohegan Lake, N.Y. 10547. Please include some stamps in your inquiry to help cover the cost of postage.

## Radical solutions to the crisis? "No Thanks!"



Sure capitalism is having a bad time of it these days but that's no reason to throw in the towel. Besides history has shown that bourgeois experts like myself can write our own tickets in the post-revolutionary society so why join up now? One thing worries me though — these Anarchists and their talk of the "self-managed society." That kind of a set-up would be bad news for me and all other "professional" managers. So I keep my eye on them. So should you. Subscription rates are \$5 for individuals for one year (six issues) and \$10 for libraries, institutions and funded organizations. Overseas subscriptions (outside North America) are \$7 per year. **STRIKE!** will be sent free to prisoners on request.

Make cheques payable to **STRIKE!** and send to: P.O. Box 2, Station O, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M4A 2M8.



# The Collection Process

## The First 100 Days

Most business billings are done on thirty day cycles. The first cycle is your initial billing and shows up as your current balance. The next cycle moves the amount owing to your previous balance but causes your creditor little concern. At the end of the third cycle (90 days) you'll probably receive a standard letter which invariably goes something like this: "Dear Customer, If you've already paid last month's bill, please disregard this letter. But, if it slipped your mind, please send your payment by return mail."

At this point everything is still hunky-dory and you'll be given 10 days to receive the letter and send a cheque back. But, you're already a long way down the road to that debt possibly being cancelled. Debts "age" as they remain uncollected and after a certain point — about a year — the debt actually costs more to collect than to write-off.

## The Collection Agency

At some point in the company's internal dunning cycle the spectre of "the collection agency" will be raised. Companies, however, are reluctant to pursue this route, especially in the case of small debts, because they automatically take a big loss. Collection agencies either but delinquent accounts at a substantial discount or operate on a commission, again substantial. So at some point, before the one year profit cut-off point, your creditor will make one last effort to collect and then either write-off the debt as a tax deduction or refer it to a collection agency — to keep the system "honest."

## The Wringer

Once in the hands of a collection agency the gloves are off. You'll start to receive increasingly vicious dunning letters threatening you with everything the agency thinks they can get away with. Their prime aim, however, is to get you to the phone as letters can too easily be ignored. Once they've gotten to talk to you they are going to try to scare you, bully you, anger you, and generally keep you off balance. Your best strategy is not to refuse payment outright but to delay, delay, delay. Make excuses, self-righteously terminate the conversation if they get too abusive, and send them a few bucks now and then. As time passes that debt just keeps getting harder and harder to collect. If you move around in the meantime and lose contact with the agency, it makes the debt even harder to collect.

## Debt

Continued from Pg. 1

Debtors were also found to be willing to go to extraordinary lengths to thwart collection agencies. From disconnecting phones to refusing to answer doorbells, from assuming false names and identities to arranging elaborate secret identification codes among friends. Often, when the bailiffs finally arrive at the debtor's door, they find the occupants sitting on orange crates — the entire apartment contents having been removed to a friend or relative's house for safekeeping.

Some debtors attempt to counter the psychological intimidation routinely employed by collection agencies by challenging the collector's own self-image. The collector's are called unfair or unjust in their methods. Another favourite ploy is to unsettle them with unexpected humour such as asking if the collector is "having a nice day." Unfortunately the study found that illegal debt collection practices are seldom challenged.

In most states and provinces the most a bill collector can do is write or phone you a few times (at reasonable hours, i.e. before 9 p.m.) with threats limited to legal action, psychological intimidation and general nuisance value. Many bill collectors far exceed these legal bounds as was shown by a 1971 case where the Standard Collection Agency of New York City was indicted on forty-six counts of extortion, coercion, harassment, grand larceny and criminal impersonation. Allegedly one of Standard's collectors told CBS-TV newscaster Pia Lindstrom that he would "wreck" her career if she didn't pay a \$200 restaurant bill run up by one of her friends on her card. Another debtor was told his arms and legs would be broken if he

didn't pay a \$350 bill while yet another was threatened with having his arms and legs cut off and being pushed out of a 26th story window if he didn't pay a bill of \$396.55.

But, some debtors do fight back. One person pointed a gun at a bailiff and told him to get out of his apartment — the bailiff prudently retreated. In another case a bailiff was assaulted with a tire iron. One debtor found that by answering his door with a running tape recorder in his hand the bailiff was reduced to speechlessness. In another case a group even arranged for hidden cameras to record a bailiff seizure. The videotape was later used as a consciousness-raising tool in the neighborhood.

By far the most encouraging development in debtor resistance, however, was the formation of a Montreal group called Citizen's Resistance Against Bailiff's Seizures (CRABS). This group attempted to transcend the isolation of debtors by organizing occupations of collection agency offices and fostering the collective perception that what was being fought was a network of repressive agencies and not a specific agency or agent. They wanted to challenge the very basis of the debt collection enterprise and make connections with other forms of working class action such as wildcats and sabotage.

The radical edge of their critique was significantly muted when they began to receive government funding. Soon they were just striving to counsel debtors and keep the collection agencies "honest." When the provincial government pulled the financial plug the project soon collapsed.

It would be easy to attack the CRABS organizers, from an anarchist perspective, for accepting

## Your Day In Court

If they are really out to get you your file will eventually be referred to a collection lawyer. Again your creditors are reluctant to do this as lawyers cost even more than collection agencies. You'll be issued a summons to appear in court, a summons that 90% of those served choose to ignore thus giving the collectors a cheap victory, if you choose to show up, again — delay, delay, delay. With even an elementary knowledge of court procedure it is possible to drag out the affair for months and months. Your creditors costs will steadily add up and the prospect of them dropping the case or offering you a good settlement increase. The magic words in the latter case are: "You realize you'll have to pay something."

## I Shot The Sheriff

Even if your creditor is particularly vindictive and a judgement is made against you the game still isn't over. These proceedings are *civil* not *criminal* and there are few penalties for evasion. You'll receive a 10 to 30 day grace period to comply with the court order after which your creditor still has to engage a bailiff to seize enough of your goods, and absolutely no more than necessary, to satisfy the judgement. Or, if you are employed, he can have your wages garnisheed. If you are locked into your job this can be a problem, although there are strict limits on the amount of your wages that can be garnisheed, if you are at all mobile you're laughing. To seize your goods they've got to find you and your goods — preferably in the same place.

## The Great Escape

Declaring personal bankruptcy is one other alternative to paying your debts (except for taxes and such things as student loans — the state exempts its own bills from bankruptcy proceedings). Declaring bankruptcy used to entail a certain social stigma which militated against its widespread use. Today more and more people see it as an admirable alternative to allowing capitalists to milk them dry. The proceedings are simple, almost painless, and so sweeping that often the mere threat of declaring bankruptcy will be enough to cow most creditors into taking a more lenient attitude to the speed and amount of your payments. The procedure can be repeated, within certain time limitations, whenever needed, Debtors Arise!

government money and thereby allowing their project to be co-opted and defused. But, like attempts to organize the unemployed, attempts to organize debtors consume incredible amounts of time and energy and constantly run up against the atomization of the individuals concerned and the social stigma attached to both chronic indebtedness and unemployment. The temptation to accept government hand-outs that enable individuals to work full-time on such projects often seems irresistible. The ideological hegemony of Marxism and Social Democracy makes the development of a culture of resistance to government and government co-optation very difficult.

The debtors themselves strike out primarily to annoy rather than to challenge the system and their resistance is notable for its briefness. The lingering hope is always that the debt will eventually be written off and the problem deferred. Projects like CRABS are important indicators of the emergence of a more confrontationist style and offer the possibility that Marxist and Social Democratic models will be rejected in favour of a truly radical critique of capital and the state.

A debtors revolt, on even a modest scale, would profoundly challenge the rule of capital. Such a challenge, however, must be informed by a truly radical consciousness if it is not to be side-tracked by half-measures such as moratoriums on interest payments or the selective cancellation of debts. But, even if only 5 to 10% of debtors declared: *We Can't Pay! We Won't Pay!* the commodity economy would be shaken to its very foundations.

# Labour Pains

## Times are Tough and so are We

Union members at Algoma and Stelco are debating plans to strike this summer in Sault Ste. Marie and Hamilton, Canada, respectively. At Algoma Steel negotiations appear to be proceeding amicably. Jack Ostroski, president of the United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Local 2251 in Sault Ste. Marie, thinks discussion of a walk-out is 'premature'. But the Stelco scenario is another story.

Stelco chairman, Peter Gordon, says union wages demands are 'unrealistic'. And stock market analysts for big business have come out against a union demand for a two year limit on any agreement. The brokers are predicting a strike based on these points.

Steel Workers' Local 1005 in Hamilton has become dissatisfied with several aspects of the work conditions at Stelco. The Union is proposing a thirty three percent increase in basic wages which now stand at \$8.95 an hour with COLA. That adds up to a three dollar increase over two years. As well the steel workers want a union administered pension indexed to the rate of inflation available after thirty years of service. We want more health and safety representatives too. Remember that there were 1500 lost time accidents in the steel industry in 1979-1980. In addition the union is demanding better shift and week-end premiums. The workers are also unhappy about vacations and are demanding more time off after five years labour-time. And the membership is also concerned to win subsidized child-care for working parents, longer notice on technical changes, and a decent COLA clause which would yield 1¢ for every .2 increase in the Consumer Price Index instead of every .3 increase in the index. We want more holidays as well. Among other things the union is bargaining for better food service which we had until the 1969 strike when the company slashed food service quality to discipline us for the walk-out. Right now the food and eating environment are disgusting.

Stelco can well afford these demands. Their profits increased from \$33 million to \$157 million between 1970-1979. And they, like Algoma, are part of the Canadian Pacific network of companies and so part of the biggest firm, in terms of assets, in Canada. By God Stelco even has connections to the Vatican. So we shouldn't worry about shaking the money tree too hard. Especially when you consider that over the last three years the Consumer Price Index has increased 35 per cent while our wages only rose 22 per cent so producing a real decline in our wages of 13 per cent. That's in addition to the \$4390 we lost to inflation between 1972 and 1975.

What is perhaps even more interesting though is the fact that steel buyers have not been able to accumulate large inventories because of high interest rates which make stock piling prohibitive. This will give the workers a stronger bargaining position in light of strong steel demand.

It appears too that the steel workers are prepared to take advantage of this bargaining position. Dave Patterson's election as director of district 6 USWA, although worth little as a personnel change, nonetheless indicates that workers are prepared to mobilize for a militant strategy which is not afraid of walk-outs. The increased interest in union activities at 1005 also testifies to this. Union meeting attendance has increased ten-fold in recent months.

But all these factors are only a first step to winning fulfilling and meaningful work. Their real importance lies in the increased level of association between workers which will be exacerbated as the capitalists unite in their turn for the purpose of repressing the collective activity of the workers. This will necessitate the defence of the workers' organizations. And that is a class demand which reveals the political aspect of this social conflict. It has the potential to weaken the sectoralism which characterizes the labour movement and could make workers receptive to the need for organs of workers' power to oppose the repressive agencies of the state which operate in the interest of capital.

## Who do they Think they're Fooling? You?

There has been quite a bit of discussion lately about the impact that Ontario, Canada's, *Bill Seventy* is having on our work conditions. The legislation says we can refuse to work if we think the conditions are not safe. Some have suggested that this aspect of the bill is a step forward for labour. In fact though the bill as a whole and its right to refuse work provision in particular isn't worth a damn.

In the first place this legislation will allow companies to limit their liability for industrial accidents by arguing that responsibility for injuries (caused mostly by terminal boredom) lies with the worker(s). And secondly programmes are already in place to educate foremen in methods of manipulating us into working when it's not safe.

This isn't the first time apparently pro-labour law has turned out on inspection to be a ploy to accumulate capital. Unemployment insurance law in Canada is the same kind of racket. And so is Ontario's Worker's Compensation legislation.

For example in its first two years of operation workers received only six per cent of the unemployment insurance fund's equity. The rest went to subsidize capital accumulation by financing the war effort in the 1940's.

The case of Ontario's workers' compensation scheme is instructive too. It seems that it was set up because court awards to workers for industrial accidents were starting to become a significant drain on company profits. That's why they pushed to have a plan built which finances costs for industrial injuries through payments from employers and employees. Its cheaper.

That's why this Safety Act business won't amount to a hill of beans for the labour movement in Ontario. Bill seventy is just going to increase the plus side of the corporate balance sheet.

*These are the old shoes - dance bare foot!*